●159

[For additional information on informants, see Category 115.]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

538 topics was reflected in his playful, jesting performances. Personality, however, is not necessarily woven into an individual's personal delivery style, because extremely reserved and nontalkative people may tell tales which are lengthy, raucous, and sometimes even bawdy. The ways in which various narratives can be treated and presented are best illustrated by discussing some individual storytellers, their personal histories, the types of stories they tell, and their method of presentation. From this information the reader may more fully appreciate the range of styles falling within the Sea Island tradition.

•159 538 *Mr. Ted Williams*, in his late forties, is a family man and one of few blacks to own a substantial amount of land on Wadmalaw Island. Along with farming that land, he owns and runs a local grocery store. As a young man he left the island to try city work, "but I didn't stay. I always think about home. I always want to come back home. And I always wanted to work for myself."[12] Mr. Ted is an influential deacon in his church, and in this capacity he participates widely in fund-raising drives and other community activities. He is a very sociable person; he likes being around people and is a welcome visitor to any home. As a deacon he is a weekly speaker before the church congregation and knows well how to inspire and excite people. His seemingly natural public speaking skills are easily carried over to his skill and ability in telling a good tale. Mr. Ted has no preference for types of folk narratives; his repertoire ranges from the humorous exploits of a scheming buzzard to serious oratory on the design of the universe. He is known best not for a particular subject but simply for his ability to tell a story, a "good lie." I found his personal style probably the most effective of all in eliciting audience participation. Once he began a tale, he was an enthusiastic teller. He amused his listeners by walking around, joking, laughing, and inspiring everyone to become involved with his story. Because he seemed to enjoy performing, any tale he told was welcomed by his listeners. He was playful and constantly teased the audience by saying that this was his last tale, and he would not tell another one. Likewise, he was a catalyst to other tellers, who often tried to imitate his style and vied with him in trying to tell the best tale. Few matched his technique, though some told more intricate stories.

Mr. Ted usually stood when he began a tale and seldom sat down until it was finished. When he did sit, it was only for a moment, and even then some part of his body was in constant motion. His hands

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 49]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

159
538
142
291
302

A leading member of the community on Wadmalaw Island, Mr. Ted Williams is known for his ability to tell a good story.

[A.48]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

were often spread to emphasize a point, or his leg would swing back and forth like a pendulum to suggest the passage of time. When not emphasizing a point, he often rotated his hand at the wrist as if keeping silent time with the rhythm of the tale. Facial expressions and voice modulations were an important part of his personal delivery. For example, many informants told the tale "Ber Rabbit and the Tar Baby." However, when Ber Rabbit begged the man not to throw him in the briar patch, Mr. Ted gave meaning to the word *beg*. His voice became whiny and whimpering, and his face took on the appearance of one in great distress. He squinched his eyes, wrinkled his nose, and in a high-pitched voice said, "Ple-e-e-ase don't throw me in there." On the page these words are almost lifeless, but when he uttered them in conjunction with such movements as making faces, raising his arms to his chest, crooking his hands and fingers, and trembling as if in mortal terror, the listeners went wild with laughter. What he said in his tales seemed almost irrevelant when compared to the many movements, expressions, and exaggerations that he used in actually performing a given tale.

Most of Mr. Ted's tales ended with a moral; if one was not readily apparent, he made one up. He liked to do what he considered moralizing and philosophizing about life. The language of his tales was contemporary Gullah, with such features as the preverbal markers *de, ben, bina,* and *don;* lack of inflections like *-ed* and *-ing;* and little of the subject-verb concord that one expects in standard English. These features, which among others distinguished his speech as contemporary Gullah and not black English or standard English (see Chapter 4), were part of what made his tales so appealing to other Gullah speakers. If he had approximated a form of standard English, as he sometimes did (see "Peter and the Rock," for instance—the switch is very obvious) he would not have been telling the tale in the language and style of the Gullah-speaking community.

Mr. James Oree is quite the opposite of Mr. Ted. He is approximately thirty-six years old. He seldom attends church; he drinks in excess; and he loves to be among the sweet ladies of the community who "like for have good time!" He enjoys his life immensely. He claims to have worked hard when he was able to work. Recently, however, he has been in failing health, and work has not "agreed" with him. Those who know him like him well. He is generally a very talk-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

159
538

ative person, once he decides that he wants to "waste" his time with you. During the period that I spent on the Sea Islands, he was always helpful but agreed to tell stories to me only at the request of the lady next door, whose encouraging words were, "You know some old-time story, so tell she some!" And some very excellent ones he told! He was quite the comedian, and all of his tales were humorous and lively (see "Ber Rabbit, Ber Wolf, and the Butter"). Even when he attempted a serious tale, it seemed to come out funny.

Like Mr. Ted, however, he had a unique personal delivery which captivated his audience and caused them to respond well to his style of expression. For example, he always took his time to tell a story, and the leisure and sheer idleness with which he spoke were part of his uniqueness as a good storyteller. As is characteristic of most Sea Island tales, his stories were series of action-packed episodes. Yet he never stood up, walked around, or moved unless he felt compelled to do so to emphasize some point. In fact, during most of his telling time, he sat with his eyes half closed, as if contemplating the character's next move. At times he seemed to be unaware of an audience; he seemed instead to be carrying on a dialogue as though he were one of the characters himself. For example, instead of introducing direct speech with the formulaic verb *say*, Mr. Oree often pretended to be the characters and simply spoke their dialogue. His ability to modulate his very deep bass voice to take on the character and speaking habits of various participants in a story seemed to be one of his most artistic techniques, adding life, zest, and interest to his tales. But even more effective was the deliberate casualness of his style, which kept the listeners hanging on every word.

There was very little actual description in Mr. Oree's tales—he used very few words, in fact, and thus even fewer long sentences. Yet the listeners were seemingly able to intuit the details of his story from the description that he did give and the slow, contemplative manner in which he told the tale. He used more ideophones than many of the other tellers, and he was also extremely adept at producing certain sounds. For example, this is the way Mr. Oree represented the caution in Ber Rabbit's steps as he tries to manuever past a hunter with a gun in an open oat field:

> Rabbit jump. . . . [He closed his eyes and contemplated, swaying back and forth as if counting to himself.] Rabbit jump. . . .

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

•159
538

[Again he swayed back and forth as if counting to himself.] De dup . . . de dup . . . de dup, going in [a pause], going in that wood, you know. Bi-i-i-g oat field."

Likewise, he imitated the chittering sound of the partridge as he inadvertently follows Ber Rabbit into the open oat field:

> Partridge . . . Ha! . . . [He paused as if contemplating the partridge's character.] He *crazy*, you know! . . . He ain't know that Ber Rabbit done got him! He gone. . . . He gone out there. He kickeri, kickeri. [Suddenly he opened his eyes and slapped his hands together.]
>
> Bam!
>
> Dead!

At this point in the speaker's narrative, his listeners had become rather involved with the suspense of his tale. It is unlikely that he would have been more effective if he had been more prolix or more descriptive. He elicited a gasp of amazement from his listeners merely by slapping his hands together to imitate the blast from the gun (*Bam!*) and by conveying the partridge's swift and instant death in the simple word *Dead!*

[201]
538

The absence of very much description in Mr. Oree's accounts is typical of Sea Island tales. The language that is used, however, suggests to the mind far more detail than could ever be set down. For example, the mention of a big oat field evokes colors (shades of browns, beiges, and greens) and a sense of vastness and openness. By choosing not to describe every detail of a scene, the narrators permit the listeners to create in their own minds certain images and impressions which give the tale added dimension. This, then, may account in part for the usual description of Sea Island literature, in written transcription, as short, incomplete, and lacking in the characteristics of sustained literary work. These standards, of course, are standards by which Western cultures have traditionally judged written literature, and they just do not apply to the literature of a people whose tradition has always been oral.

159
538
539

Again, as I noted, gestures were not an inherent part of Mr. Oree's style; rather, it was his whole body posture—sitting, half reclining, eyes half closed, his feet apart, his arms and hands turned slightly inward and resting on his lap—which seemed to communicate to his audience. But just as, according to Birdwhistell, all body movement or

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

expression has meaning, so does the absence of movement. Though Mr. Oree held himself nearly still, making gestures only to emphasize a point in an episode, he held his audience captive through story after story.

The language Mr. Oree used is characteristic of contemporary Gullah speech on Wadmalaw Island. He did not get formal education beyond the tenth grade, and he has no desire for social prestige on the island. Thus he has felt little if any need to adapt his speech to conform to that of the more affluent, better-educated, rising social class. In his tales one finds the influence of outside social forces in some of the words used, but much of the content, structure, and language of the tales remain unquestionably Gullah, and most probably African in origin.

Mr. Henry Gibbs, one of the oldest members of his community, is now approximately one hundred. Until recent years he was always an active member of his church. He is a fairly well-educated man, reads and writes very well, can see well enough to plow a garden each year with his favorite mule, but can hear only when he takes a "notion" to do so. He is always serious and majestic in manner and appearance. Likewise, his oratory is always on matters he feels to be grave, profound, historical, and factual. He will tolerate no discussions of trivia. He told me that he participated in the Marcus Garvey movement and that he can remember his parents talking about "slavery and the 'buckra' [white man] as good as yesterday." He claims to know every family on Wadmalaw Island and most of those on adjoining islands. He is held in grand esteem and awe by his family, friends, and neighbors. Mr. Henry's life-style is somewhat unusual: he keeps all of his belongings in his shanty, located centrally to his wife's home and to his children's and grandchildren's homes. He prefers the solitude of his own house, he says, so that he can think and reflect without being disturbed by noises from his family. His choice is reminiscent of the separate living quarters characteristic in traditional Igbo, Yoruba, and other West African cultures.

Mr. Henry's narrative style is more descriptive than some Sea Islanders', but this distinction is perhaps related to the subject matter of his narratives, primarily legends and historical accounts, the nature of which requires a certain seriousness in presentation. This personal

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

style does, however, represent a method of expression characteristic of many Sea Island folk narrators, which is anything but comic.

During my stay, most of Mr. Henry's tales were told on his front porch, with people gathered around him. One unusual feature of his delivery was that, even at one hundred years old, he always stood when he was ready to begin a narrative, though unlike Mr. Ted, Mr. Henry seldom walked around as he talked. Amid his listeners, he stood erect and composed in one spot during the whole course of his narrative, which could go on for hours. Many times his wife (now deceased) came and asked him to eat lunch or dinner, or just to let the visitors go home; in the latter case he continued speaking as he followed us to the car.

Sometimes during a long narrative he would stop, take out his handkerchief, wipe his face, and seem to stare out across the open field in front of his home. At these times it was quite obvious that his narrative had brought to his mind memories of times gone past. His eyes, which he himself said would not see much that they had not seen before, became moist. But it was incommensurate with his manner to lose his dignity and composure. Thus, grasping his cane more firmly, he stood quiet, firm and serene, until the moment passed and he was ready to continue his narrative.

Like Mr. Oree, Mr. Henry seemed to command attention through his bodily presence. But in contrast to the casual style characteristic of Mr. Oree, Mr. Henry captivated his audience with seriousness. With his feet planted firmly on the floor, arms held at his side, he made few gestures. To stress a point, he would perhaps raise one arm and point with his entire hand, as opposed to one finger. The other arm generally remained immobile at his side, with the hand slightly opening and closing in a half fist. Little else moved. His face was expressive, but for the most part he told his narratives, one after the other, standing in the same spot.

His voice was strong and clear in spite of his age. While he spoke, silence pervaded the audience. Even children felt the need to whisper a complaint in his presence. His age was certainly a factor, in that the islanders have much respect for the elderly in their communities, especially a member as exalted as Mr. Henry. Nevertheless, his age was not the primary ingredient in his success as an oral artist. His descriptions were very detailed. He made exceptional use of pauses, seem-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

ingly in order to permit the listeners to reflect on the content of his narrative; whatever his reason, it was a highly effective technique. During his long pauses, older members often offered a word of encouragement, such as "Tell em, Henry." Mr. Henry would reply, "Shore [sure]! I remember that good as yesterday!"

Like most good Sea Island narrators, Mr. Henry used a highly emotional oratorical method that tended to stimulate and excite his listeners. He frequently used repetition and parallel constructions, with mesmerizing effects. For example, he often spoke of the days of his youth, a time when he lived and worked on a plantation. The simple words "We ben living over there . . . on the white people place . . . the white people place" alone on the page can never capture the emotion of his phrasing or show his grave expression as he paused to reflect. The words had apparently brought to mind untold memories, so many that he felt compelled to repeat the phrase again softly and more deliberately, as if each word had history in itself.

In addition to his various uses of repetition, Mr. Henry would often actually shout out with passionate anger, joy, or excitement. To his exclamations, older members would respond with equal fervor. He would call out the name of a responding member and ask, for example:

> "Myma, you ain't know what I bina talk about, do you?"

The respondent (Myma in this case) would reply:

> "Yeah man! Shore I bina know!"
> "Huh?"
> "Yeah! Yeah!"
> "But this one here [pointing to a younger member] ain't de know. E [he] ain't even ben born yet."

Appropriately to his topics, Mr. Henry's language had formal overtones even in casual utterances. Thus he retained the elements characteristic of a creolized Gullah speech: one pronoun for both masculine and feminine subjects, a range of preverbal markers, few if any morphological inflections, the introductory or formulaic verb *say*, and other features of the creole tradition (see Chapter 4).

Miss Deeley would not reveal her age, nor would she consent to being recorded or permit me to use her last name, but she is one of the most prolific women storytellers that I encountered. She is fifty or

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

She is fifty or more years of age, gets around well, is the oldest member of her household, and is primarily responsible for the total care of more than ten children, ranging in ages from two to sixteen years of age. Some of them are her own children; others are her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Six of them live with her, and four are left in her care during the day while their parents are away working. I had the pleasure of spending more than two weeks residing with Miss Deeley and her large family. I shared a large room with three of the girls and came to appreciate the effort that went into keeping that room clean and orderly at all times. No one was allowed to retire for the evening without a bath regardless of circumstances. Most of the time, a fire was built around a large black pot in the early evening to heat the water for baths before supper was served. All the children were lined up and given baths in a number-three washtub, given their nightclothes, and served supper around a large handmade wooden table. Miss Deeley had not accepted electricity for her home, so a kerosene lamp was the primary source of light after nightfall. Mealtime was always a pleasure at this home. The last meal of the day often consisted of cowpeas and rice cooked and seasoned with "bone," or rice served with shrimp and other fish caught by the children during the day. There was always hot corn bread and molasses and a bucket of iced tea.

After meals were served, the children gathered around the open fireplace, and Miss Deeley entertained all of us for hours until the fire died down and the sleeping children had to be carried to their beds. This woman was an avid storyteller. Her general procedure was first to get everyone settled. Then she herself could get comfortable in the place always reserved for her by the window. After poking around in the fire until she was satisfied that it was burning well, she would lean back in her chair, take a couple of good bites of tobacco, kept in her apron pocket, and then lift up the youngest child into her lap and begin to reminisce about happenings during the day. She had the ability to tell a range of stories, but she seemed particularly adept at hag, ghost, or other psychological thrillers. She traveled around much in her day as a migrant worker in Arizona and Colorado; she said she heard some of her stories around the campfires there. Others she had learned from her parents and grandparents, and still others she said she had just made up to keep the children entertained.

Miss Deeley was fairly strict with the children. Once she permitted two of the oldest to go to the island store for some "sweet"; she spat

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

538 not only on the children but on the adults who often came to visit her as
115 well. Many times the children sat with their eyes glued to her face or staring dazed into the fire, hypnotized by the slow, steady rhythm of her voice unfolding the bizarre events of her tale. At times, her voice became so low, and she paused so long, that some of the younger children stirred, and the older ones lashed out in anger at them for disturbing the chilling mood that had been created. In tales of hags, ghosts, and other strange happenings, the audience did not usually respond quickly as they did with other, less suspenseful, tales, primarily because topics such as these were not taken lightly by the islanders. Many are staunch believers in hags, ghosts, voodoo, and the occult. Thus tales of this kind were told not only for entertainment but to inform or to reaffirm the listeners' belief in the existence of these seen and unseen forces rampant throughout the islands and the universe.

538 Furthermore, such grave topics often had an aesthetic appeal somewhat different from that of funny or historical tales. The audience was not lively, loud, or as energetic as it would be when listening to the exploits of Ber Rabbit. Witty stories are deserving of spirited and excited responses. In listening to tales of the supernatural, the audience tended to be not only quiet but filled with awe and reverence, even more for one who knew of such things by firsthand experience than for the topic itself. There was some verbal interplay between Miss Deeley and her audience, but it was much more subdued than even in prayers and sermons. In prayers and sermons the audience is expected to participate openly in the event. People are free to speak as loud and become as verbally unrestrained as they want "when the spirit hits them." In listening to tales like Miss Deeley's, the audience was restrained both by the subject and by the speaker's use of a lowered, even whispered, tone to help create an eerie effect; many times the listeners had to strain to hear every word. As a result, most displays from the audience were in the form of low moans ("unmmm . . . uh") or an occasional "yeah, man," "shonuf so" or "where you de say you see em?" In these narratives—especially where a story was felt to have an actual basis in fact—the listeners' questions were not rhetorical, and the speaker took time out from the events of the tale to answer them.

159 Miss Deeley was one of the few informants who still included
533 songs in some of the tales told. Songs are an inherent part of most West
538 African stories, and of stories told throughout the Caribbean, because

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

159 533 538 they give the audience an opportunity to become an active participant in the telling event. Some Sea Island informants who knew many kinds of tales often included songs and thus encouraged the audience to participate in singing the chorus. Many of those who did not know the words to the chorus participated by clapping their hands, patting their feet, or humming along with those who were singing. The Sea Island tales with songs were far more exciting in eliciting a wide response from the audience than those without songs.

159 538 Though Miss Deeley is most noted for telling tales of bizarre happenings and supernatural events, I found that the children who were left in her care seemed to remember the words and melodies to the songs in the tales much better than they remembered the unusual events (see "The Three Pear[s]"). This woman's vast repertoire of tales, like her knowledge about various medicinal cures, is perhaps a result of her having given birth to thirteen children, twelve of whom are living. She told me that telling them stories helped keep them occupied and out of trouble. In addition, some of the older children used the same tales and techniques to keep the younger ones amused. Now that most of her own children are grown, she continues the storytelling tradition with the grandchildren and great-grandchildren left in her care. Furthermore, while she does indeed believe in modern medicine, she says she finds that most of the ailments that she and her family have suffered could be cured or helped by various roots that she found on the islands. The most popular of these is the bloodroot, which when boiled makes a reddish tea and is exceptionally good for high blood pressure. The snakeroot, which must be boiled and permitted to stand or age with good whiskey, is very useful for increasing the appetite and eliminating constipation.

159 Though Miss Deeley would not consent to being recorded, she was patient enough to permit me to take down one story ("The Three Pear[s]") verbatim. This tale represents her language well.

159 *Mr. Jonas Mickell* became a close friend over a period of years, and I am indebted much to him and his wife for the time and effort they took to help contribute to this and other studies. Mr. Mickell is a well-respected man in his community. He traveled much around the islands by boat in his day and thus always had stories to tell of his adventures. He is sixty or more years old and says that he was somewhat "sporty" with the ladies before he was married, some forty years ago, to his

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

159 present wife. He admits to directing appreciating glances at a fine-looking woman even today, but says that a look is the extent of his appreciation.

Mr. Mickell attended elementary school on Johns Island, but because he had to work to help support his family, he was forced to quit school during the elementary grades. Yet he has done well for himself. He was in the navy and has worked on various jobs from handyman to longshoreman. He now lives a rather tranquil but satisfying life, with a degree of comfort slightly more sumptuous than that of many islanders.

159 538 Mr. Mickell is a gifted storyteller. Many of the tales I heard him tell have direct parallels with some told in Nigeria (see "Ber Rabbit and the Lord"). His speaking style is as characteristic of Sea Island speech as the other informants'. He speaks very rapidly with a very high pitch and tone. In fact, I sometimes found it extremely difficult to understand him when he became engrossed in a narrative. The problem with interpretation was not with his vocabulary, though he knew many old words with African origins; the problem was primarily a phonological one. The rhythm, tempo, and stress with which he pronounced the English words is really one of the most outstanding characteristics of contemporary Gullah speech. Though I had difficulty adjusting to his delivery, the audience composed of speakers born and raised on the Sea Islands had no problem at all, as would be expected.

I found Mr. Mickell's most distinguishing feature to be his use of gestures and repetition. A rapid rate of speaking, sustained high pitch, and strong rhythm are characteristic of the community. Mr. Mickell, however, spoke more quickly than others. The rapid speaking style was enough in itself to create excitement, but the method by which Mr. Mickell used repetition, whether in words or phrases or in parallel structure, helped to intensify the excitement in his rapid series of action-packed episodes. In one tale, for example, he described how a king snake is able to kill other snakes. He conveyed the striking manner in which the king snake coils itself around its victim through a series of words repeated rapidly in succession, "Wrap up, wrap up, wrap up." To illustrate this action, he made his hands into fists and rolled them rapidly over and over in front of him, completing the coiling gesture with a "psssup" to indicate that the victim is completely immobile within the coils. To show how the king snake stretches its victim and shatters its spinal cord in one quick motion, Mr. Mickell

159 201 538

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

slowly pulled his fist apart to suggest a slow stretching process, saying, "Stretch out, stretch out, stretch out." Then, in a sweeping motion, he tightened his fist and with one violent jerk emphasized the king snake's ultimate quick, spasmodic motion.

Mr. Mickell is a great talker. The speech samples I obtained from him ranged from childhood experiences to tales of the bizarre. He is a good singer and participates in the shouts with enthusiasm. But the outstanding feature in his repertoire is a collection of dozens and dozens of riddles. Riddling is a pastime activity common among the older Sea Island men and women. In fact, Mr. Mickell and one of his close friends often sat for hours telling riddles until one or the other ran out of riddles to tell.

Without a doubt, *Aneatha Brisbane, Miss Myma*, is my closest link to the Sea Island communities. She was born in a shanty, still standing on Wadmalaw Island, and never really ventured far from the site on which it now stands. Her mother lived in the shanty before Miss Myma was born, and when she died, Miss Myma continued to live there until she purchased a one-bedroom trailer some fifteen or twenty years ago. The trailer was a weather-beaten shell of a home consisting of a living room, a kitchen, and a bedroom. It had no running water, no electricity, and no toilet, though it was equipped with appropriate connections. I soon understood that while these things are primary for survival for most Americans, to stay on the Sea Islands I had to be ready to live without them. I learned to adjust my eyes to the kerosene lamp that Miss Myma lit so that I could read after nightfall. I learned to make sure that we got wood in to burn in the potbellied wood stove to warm the house in the cool mornings. I learned that if I filled a number-three tub with water from a neighbor's well in the morning and set it in the hot island sun all day, the water would be just the right temperature for a refreshing bath in the evening.

Miss Myma is a very sophisticated-looking woman, with high cheek bones, reddish brown skin that she says she acquired from the Wadmalaw Indians, and the most beautiful white hair I ever saw. She is naturally friendly, smokes a pipe, and is said to have been very lively in her younger days. She is soft-spoken and generally restrained in her language (though I have heard some of her women friends use words which would make the vulgarest of men shrink in shame). Her manner can be deceiving, however. I observed her once in an argument with

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 62]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

159 one of her friends, who accused her of taking some tobacco which Miss Myma clearly could not have taken. Her friend attacked her viciously and called her some scandalous names. With each insult Miss Myma replied, "You de right, darlin," or "Sho will, honey," or "I know you ben tell truth for sho, baby." Finally, the friend looked rather foolish, throwing out insults and having them accepted so calmly. So, clearly feeling unfulfilled because she had not had the satisfaction of arousing Miss Myma to any angry word play, she left kicking up dust and looking back over her shoulder as she stalked down the sandy lane from Miss Myma's house. I had seen Miss Myma at her best in heated arguments over far smaller issues before; thus I asked her in amazement why she had not retaliated and defended herself forcefully. She took her pipe from her mouth, shook it in the direction her friend had taken, and replied thoughtfully that that particular woman was a fool, and she left fools in the hands of the Lord.

159 123 Miss Myma was apparently in her mid to late seventies when I met her. She told me that she "forget" how old she really was, but she could come close if I could tell her how old some of her childhood friends were. In spite of her age, she remains one of the most active people on the island. She taught me to crab, net, and fish. In fact, I caught my first dogfish while fishing on the banks of an island stream. The thing actually had feet and barked like a dog when I caught it on the hook. When I asked if the fish were edible, the children standing on the bank laughed at my ignorance before they said no.

Every day was an exciting day with Miss Myma. We got up around six o'clock and drove the fifteen or more miles to James Island to get a cup of coffee. Miss Myma liked to ride, and I loved the invigorating smell of the Sea Island morning air. If we were going to the creek that day, we would gather our gear beforehand. If we were going "bogging" for crabs, which was Miss Myma's preferred way to catch them, we would get our sticks and go to the creek after the tide had gone out. Bogging for crabs is hard work; one even needs specific shoes for this venture. When the tide goes out, many crabs are left in the various nooks and crannies of the creek bank and bed. The stick is used not only for support but to prod into holes to scare out the crabs. When one is found, it is provoked into clamping onto the stick and then pulled up and dropped into a large bucket. If the crab is ornery and refuses to clamp onto the stick, the stick is used to hold him down. He is picked up from the back and his two front claws are quickly clamped together;

159 123 226

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

159 then he is thrown into the bucket. In a good season one gets more crabs
123 than one can eat in a couple of hours. If the season is bad, one can stay
226 out in the creek all day in the sultry island sun and still have only a few "po, skase [scarce]" little crabs. During the bad seasons it was usually I and not Miss Myma who finally had to come in. She could walk miles in those creek beds. One day, when we had come upon a pool of water deeper than the regular creek bed, and thus not emptied by the tide, she decided she would teach me to throw a net. She stooped, pulled out her net, stationed part of the midpoint in her teeth, stretched a portion along her arm, circled the net a bit for balance, let go of the string, and twirled the net up over the small but deep hole of water. The net circled, fanned out, and landed on the pool. "Good throw, Miss Myma," I cried out. She replied, "Got em, a mullet for sho, Pat." It was true, she had netted several mullet, but what she didn't know was that she had netted a snake as well!

159 Crabbing can be dangerous for those unfamiliar with "ocean
123 time." While one can bog for crabs when the tide goes out, one can net
226 a few when the tide starts back in. I learned that the trickling sounds
133 heard only at certain times are made when the nooks and crannies are being filled with water. I also learned that the tide can be deceiving because it comes in very slowly. Once we had been walking on the muddy creek floor for hours when I casually observed that the water was covering my shoes; a little later I noted that it was over my ankles. I thought I was just walking into deeper puddles and thus continued to practice my netting. Then I found that the water was beginning to hit me above my knees. Suddenly I became alarmed and looked back down the creek the way we had come. It was only then that I realized that the water was not only filling the creek bed but had covered the marshland, and there was no clearly perceivable way back to the higher ground. Frightened, I yelled out to Miss Myma that we were going to drown. She stopped, looked up and down the creek, pulled a bit of Day's Work chewing tobacco out of her pocket, took a good bite, offered me some, grinned when I passed on it, and finally said, "Guess time we fe go now." She had crabbed in that creek since she was a child, and she knew every bend and angle of it. Without her experience, however, I believe I would have panicked and perhaps drowned because it takes only minutes for the tide to rush in and fill the creek at any given point.

159 Miss Myma's presence was imperative at storytelling contests,
538

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

whether held at Mr. Ted's store or in the clearing under the big Angel Oak tree behind her trailer. As noted before, Miss Myma always told the first tale at a preplanned storytelling, as a way of sanctioning the event. Really not much of a storyteller, she was more relaxed when a group of her "nipping" friends decided to tell "lies" at her house than at gatherings at Mr. Ted's store. The huge Angel Oak, with its ghostly hanging moss, shaded the ground so grass would not grow around it and thus helped to provide a clean, insect-free surface on which to relax. It also served as an anchor for Miss Myma's many respectable and some not-so-respectable friends, a place to sit, smoke, take little nips, and catch the breeze throughout the day. By late afternoon, when her respectable friends had long since gone to return to jobs, see about the children, or attend to chores, her not-so-respectable friends, not having to be responsible to anyone or anything, would settle in and ready themselves to tell lies throughout the night. Miss Myma's sleeping times remain a source of fascination for me. I could never understand how she managed to get up so early and go to bed so late. But then, many of the islanders are night people, roaming the highways, dancing, listening to music, and visiting friends in the dark. There were, however, occasions when Miss Myma actually got up and went to bed, leaving her friends still nipping under the oak.

In the winter of 1976 Miss Myma finally agreed to come to Michigan to visit me. She would not consent to fly; she would come only if I sent her a Greyhound bus ticket. I sent her the ticket and was delighted that she actually did come, and even more delighted that she would stay for three weeks. It was horribly cold in Michigan that year; Miss Myma did not care to go outside, and cared even less for the nine-degree-below-zero temperature and the mounds of snow. She preferred the warmth and comfort of sitting by the fireplace in our den, smoking her pipe. I was glad that we had a fireplace, and especially happy when she looked into the fire and began to reminisce and tell my two young children tales of Ber Rabbit. She gave them an oral tradition of tales in those three weeks that could not be matched with a lifetime of written literature. They were utterly fascinated by her. She knew my three-year-old daughter well not only because I had taken her with me to visit the Sea Islands but because on one of those occasions my daughter, who is asthmatic, had a severe attack around three in the morning. I had used all of her medicine, and there are no drugstores on Wadmalaw Island. Miss Myma observed her labored breathing for a while, and

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

chastised me for not keeping an extra bottle of her medicine with me. Then she got up calmly, took her kerosene lamp, went out in the field behind her house, dug up some kind of root, brought it back, washed it, and boiled it. When the tea from the root had cooled, she took my wheezing daughter into her lap and coaxed her into drinking a cup of the reddish liquid. Twenty minutes later my daughter lay asleep and breathing peacefully on her lap.

In the fall of 1982 Miss Myma's trailer caught fire from her kerosene lamp and burned. Fortunately, she was not injured in the fire. She went to live with a relative whom she had raised as her daughter and who lived only a few doors away. Miss Myma is well into her eighties now. Her daughter told me that her mind wanders from time to time and that she has a tendency to wander off physically from home. In fact, she strayed down to the creek and was lost overnight at one point. A rescue squad was called in, but she was not found until the next morning when a helicopter pilot spotted her sitting out in the open field just beyond the creek banks. She was alert and did not suffer as much as a cold from the dampness and exposure. When I saw her most recently in the spring of 1985, she was sitting under the Angel Oak, a little nip in one hand to warm her blood, a crabbing stick in the other. She was smiling faintly and waving goodbye to me as I headed down the lane. She looked as if she were waiting for just the right moment to slip off down to the creek and nab a crab or catch a mullet "for sho."

Ida Mae is different from most of the women on the Sea Islands, very different. After having five children out of wedlock, and becoming a grandmother four times over by the time she was thirty-nine, she told me she had given up trying to be respectable in that community.

Ida Mae was an attractive woman when I met her in 1973. She had nut brown skin and flashing white teeth accented by a gold tooth that glistened in the sun when she laughed. She had the kind of face that was designed for the close-cut, boyish afro that she kept edged to perfection. Her light hazel eyes—"devil eyes," the islanders called them—were offset by her rich, dark color and gave the appearance of jumping out at you. She liked her eyes and said they were one of the reasons that she had had the gold tooth put in. In fact, when she first got it, she said, she used to practice smiling and turning her head just so the light would touch on her eyes, her tooth, and the large fourteen-karat gold hoop earrings that one of her men friends had given her. She

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

159 142 had the dark full lips which some people call "blue lips" because of their defined darkness and smoothness. They are the kind of lips that never need lipstick, but I have seen her take one of her children's graphite pencils, scratch it against a surface to make the point soft and blunt, and rub it across her lips to accentuate their darkness. In spite of having had five children, she still had an excellent figure, and a figure is important to Sea Island men. Her rounded posterior filled out her jeans and made all of her clothes hang just right. She told me once that 159 she was not sure it was an advantage to a woman to be built the way 836 she was, because if she had not had, in her own words, "such a big ass," maybe the men would have left her alone, and she would not 142 have got pregnant when she was fourteen. She reflected on that state- 836 ment for awhile, took a long draw from her cigarette, and then amended it by saying, "Hell, who knows what I would have done?" She had always liked men as much as they seemed to like her, she finished by saying, and she probably would have got pregnant anyway.

159 I concluded that her attractiveness emanated not only from her looks but from her style and manner as well. She had a natural, inborn sophistication and presence that any *Vogue* model would envy. I showed her a copy of *Vogue* once, along with *Essence*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Ebony*, and asked if she would like a complimentary subscription to one for Christmas. She flipped through *Vogue* and commented that she had no place to go to wear the kind of "shit" the models displayed; she browsed through *Essence* and said it had too much fancy cooking, and the only food that tasted good to her was cowpeas and bone; she read through *Cosmopolitan* and said it seemed to be about white women wanting sex, and hell, she got enough of that without reading about it. She finally settled on *Ebony* because she liked the pictures of Billy Dee Williams.

In spite of her language and outward hardness, there was something about Ida Mae that made her very feminine. Perhaps it was the way she held her cigarette, the way she walked, or the way she smiled just enough to show a glint of her gold tooth. Perhaps it was the 159 coyness with which she captivated a man's attention, any man's, that 832 made the more respectable women of the community dislike her and the more respectable men, especially the older ones, want to get close enough to her to smell her perfume, maybe inadvertently brush against her, or at least get into a position to see her back action as she walked away. I even overheard a deacon in the church comment to her one

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina .

159 832 afternoon, while buying a soda at Mr. Ted's store, that she had on a mighty fine-looking dress and it was sho' hitting her in all the right places. She turned, gazed into his eyes just a split second longer than what was respectable, flipped a few ashes from her cigarette on his shiny black shoes, smiled ever so slightly, and walked away. He watched her as she moved out of his eyesight. Then he hitched up his pants, put both hands in his front pockets, and asked the Lord to give him strength.

159 123 Late one Saturday afternoon I walked up the lane past the Angel Oak behind Miss Myma's house to visit Ida Mae. She lived in a two-room shanty with three of her five children. The two older girls had lived with her mother since they were born. There were no children yelling and screaming outside, however, so I thought Ida Mae was not home. I started to leave when she popped her head out of her bedroom and said, "Hi, Pat." I was lonely, so I was glad to find her in. I asked her why it was so quiet, and where the children were. She said she sent them down to her mother's house to spend the night. When I asked her why, she replied, "Ain't you business, but I de spect company soon, and when he de come, you go have fe leave." I said that was okay. We sat on the broken steps in front of her shanty and chatted about general things, children, school, work, people on the islands.

She asked about my husband and if he didn't get jealous with me running around down there. I said I didn't think so, that I had really never given him a reason to be jealous. She replied that men never needed a reason to be jealous, that they were jealous by nature and it was to a woman's advantage to keep them that way. She asked what I was doing on the islands every year, and what Africa had been like, and if the men loved big-butt women there as much as men did here. I told her that I was trying to reconstruct Africanisms, and yes, the African men loved big-butt women as much as Sea Island men did. In fact, I told her that my female friends in Nigeria had teased me because my rear end was not as round as theirs, and I had retaliated by saying that was true for me, but the Sea Island women still had behinds that would put theirs to shame. She laughed and said she was glad I told the bitches that.

She offered me a cigarette. I thanked her but refused, saying I didn't smoke. Then she offered me a shot of whiskey; again, I thanked her but refused, saying I didn't drink. Then she offered me a joint; I thanked her and said I didn't smoke pot either, and wondered where

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

159
123

she had got it. She turned, studied me a moment, and said, "You ain't de drink, ain't de smoke cigarette, ain't de dulge in pot. What de hell you do for fun? You de Jehovah Witness or something?" I laughed and told her I liked to travel, write, and come down there to visit her. She shook her head and replied that I must lead a sad life if coming down there was what I called fun.

As we sat talking and gazing out at the dusk and incoming fog, she asked me if I remembered the time I had gone with her to work in the field tying tomatoes. We laughed and reflected on that day. She had told me that if I really wanted to go I had to get up around six o'clock, put on some long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and borrow one of Miss Myma's wide straw hats. I could hardly sleep that night thinking I would oversleep and miss the truck. Miss Myma woke me up, though, and cautioned me for the fifth time that it was too hot in the fields, that some people had had sunstrokes, and that I should stay there with her until Ida Mae came back in the evening. For the fifth time I said no, I wanted to go. When I arrived at Ida Mae's house dressed in my tomato-tying clothes, she grinned at me and asked if I had brought anything for lunch. I said no, so we walked down to Mr. Ted's store, and I bought some Vienna sausage and crackers. Then we stood by the highway until Dan Seabrooke came along in his truck and picked us up to drive us the ten or so miles to the tomato patch. Once we got there, we piled out and were each given strips of twine and told to take a row. I took one between Ida Mae and one of her friends because they felt that between the two of them, they could help me keep up.

Tying tomatoes is a monotonous, tiring, backbreaking job. Some of those rows were more than a mile long. A stick had been hammered into the ground to support each plant. We took the twine and tied the plant to the stick near the base, in the middle, and at the top. Each plant was about a foot from the next, and when we had tied one plant to its stick, we moved on to the next one, and the next one, and the next one, and the next one until we reached the end of the row. When we reached the end of one long row, we turned around and started back down another long row. It took a while for me to get the hang of what to do, and thus I found myself falling behind the others in the field. Ida Mae stopped tying her row and started tying my plants in front of me, so that when I got up to that point I could skip to where the rest of the people were. Around ten o'clock I was tying as fast as I could and sweating profusely. I did not think I could make it until noon and finish at least half a day, but Ida Mae told me if I could tie just until I reached

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

159 the big Angel Oak down on the end it would be noon and I could rest.
123 That consoled me. She said that when our shadow was directly under our feet on the row we were tying it would be twelve o'clock. When that happened, true enough, the whistle blew and we stopped, walked back to the truck, took turns getting cool drinks of water with a dipper from the cooler in back of the truck, got our lunches, sat down, ate, and rested.

One o'clock came only too quickly, three came too slowly, and five o'clock quitting time not quickly enough. The temperature rose to more than 103 degrees, and there was nothing between the sun and my head but Miss Myma's straw hat. I will always be grateful to Ida Mae for her help that day. She tied her row and most of mine, but I could at least tell Miss Myma that I had made a day! I would treasure that day and that ten dollars as among my most demanding achievements.

159 As we sat and continued to wait for Ida Mae's company, I re-
123 minded her of her summertime addiction to card playing. When she did not catch a truck to go to the fields, she spent the day, from sunup
525 to sundown, with her card-playing buddies. They took turns buying a nipping bottle to help them get through the day. I met her when she came to play cards one day under the Angel Oak behind Miss Myma's house and Miss Myma took me out to meet her and her friends. I think I enjoyed these people more than any other group on the Sea Islands. When they played cards, they played for money, and for keeps. They invited me to play once; I accepted and lost twenty dollars my first game. After that, I just sat and listened. I learned that Ida Mae could outplay and outcurse any of the men. In addition, she could match them word for word playing the dozens. Once a card-playing friend asked her to scramble him some eggs for breakfast. She replied, "I ain't you wife." He said he knew that, but he still wanted some eggs. She answered, "I ain't you maid." He said he would pay her to cook them. She replied, "With what? I de win all you money." Then he said, "Well, I pay you with something else then." She answered, "You ain't got nothing else I de want." He said, "Well, you de come on and de go with me and you de see what I got." She burst into laughter and said, "What for I ben go with you, you ain't know what fe do with me if you de get me!"

159 Now we sat on in the dark. Eventually we saw the lights from a car
123 coming up the lane; the car stopped in front of the shanty, and a tall attractive man got out and, as was customary, handed her a half gallon of ice cream as a gift. Since I already knew him, and also knew that he

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

159 [123] 159 596

was another woman's man, I excused myself and walked back down the lane to Miss Myma's house.

A few years ago Ida Mae lost her mother, and a while later her father. As the oldest, she had to move back home to become the head of her extended family, according to traditional Sea Island practice. Among those who now needed her was John, a mentally retarded cousin around thirty-six or thirty-seven years old. She told me that the reason she could not accept a ticket to come and visit me was that she could not trust anyone else to take care of him. John frightened me when I first met him, not because he was retarded but because he was alert enough to know the value of money and, running out to my car when I drove up, grabbed my arm and demanded, "Quarter, quarter, quarter." He would not let go until someone had given him a quarter. Later I realized that was how he managed to have money to buy pop and ice cream whenever someone went to the store: everyone who came to Ida Mae's house had to give John a quarter. He was purported to keep them in socks, hidden somewhere around the house.

I last saw Ida Mae in the summer of 1984. She had lost weight and no longer had the old sassiness in her walk or devilishness in her eyes. After all, she has to take full responsibility for more than twelve people now, and surely that is enough to drain some of the spunk out of even the sassiest of women. Nevertheless, as she sat on her front porch fanning flies and rocking her new grandbaby, a gentleman drove up, got out of his car, and said that since it was "hot too much" out, he thought she might like a little ice cream to cool her off. She took a long draw from her cigarette, turned, gazed intently into his eyes, and smiled just enough for him to see the glint of her gold tooth.

159 [538]

I found that Ida Mae's presence served as a welcome catalyst for spontaneous, ribald storytelling. Although she was unbeatable at playing the dozens, she was not herself much of a storyteller. Because of her life-style she felt she was an outcast in the community. She seldom ventured far from home, unless she was going to work in the field; seldom associated with women other than those who played cards with her daily; and seldom attended church. Thus she had little opportunity to come in contact with language other than the creole, and as a result, her speech was more characteristic of contemporary Gullah than most.

115

Ozzie Rivers, Mr. Hampy (Happi), was a very religious, serious man who could sit for hours sermonizing and philosophizing about

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

had often been hospitalized for short periods for her condition. She finally lost the battle or, as some islanders said, she finally won the battle, staked her sword in the golden sand, and went home to the Kingdom of God on 4 July 1984. Mr. Hampy was told, and he died the next day, 5 July. Some said that the couple had been together so long that his spirit had become a part of hers and that when she died, he died simply because he lacked the will to live without her. Others commented that since her body remained warm so long after her death, she was waiting for him to follow.

Their funeral was one of the most elaborate I have seen in the Sea Island area. The cost was well in excess of fifteen thousand dollars, a total which the couple had prepared for over the years by paying on their funeral policy. They had matching blue caskets with intricate gold designs. Hers was covered with a spread of pink flowers, his with a spread of blue ones. The undertaker was careful with such details as having her coffin brought in first and stationing her coffin to the left of his. These were things that the viewers would observe and remember when they selected someone to handle their own funeral arrangements.

The Presbyterian church was packed beyond capacity, and I stood outside the door of the church along with other friends hoping to see the couple one last time. Two male associates had accompanied me to the funeral and stood among the other men on the church ground, chatting. As a female, I knew that I was not permitted this liberty. Women do not stand outside the church and chat when services are going on. If they cannot get inside the church, they stand as close to it as possible or remain in their cars. In a break with custom, the caskets were not opened for viewing the bodies; I walked with others more than two miles up a long, narrow, muddy lane to the gravesite, still hoping to see their faces. However, before I made it up the lane, they had passed the younger children over the caskets to prevent their spirits from being "touched" by the spirits of the dead. As is traditional, they buried Mr. Hampy and Miss Maime side by side, she on his left, in a densely wooded area to help enclose their spirits. Each grave was covered with flowers and clocks were set at the time each one died.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

cation and voter registration. The man who organized the Progressive Club was Esau Jenkins, who was born and raised on Johns Island and became one of the most effective grass roots leaders in the South. It was Esau who first conceived the Citizenship School Program, which the Reverend Martin Luther King's organization later administered throughout the South. The remarkable story of Esau's life and his efforts to bring progress to Johns Island is told in chapter 6. At that time it was not so clear how important the spread of the Citizenship School Program across the South was to be. A chapter has been added to trace the history of the program in the 1950s and its subsequent impact on the civil rights movement.

Esau Jenkins died in 1972, and his wisdom and understanding, his fighting spirit, are missed by all. In December 1987, while we were interviewing people for the update to this book, Septima Clark also died. A teacher all her life, she taught on Johns Island in 1916 as a teenager. She was part of the Charleston County school system until 1956, when she was fired for belonging to the NAACP. She then went to work for the Highlander Folk School and became supervisor of the literacy program in the sea islands. At the time of her death, she was recognized nationally as an educator and civil rights leader.

In 1988 many of the families who told their stories in the early 1960s still live on Johns Island. Most of the older people have passed on, of course, and children have grown and married and have children of their own. The younger generation has received more education, sometimes quite sophisticated skills. Gerald Mackey is a good example. At the end of chapter 6 he can be seen as a teenager riding in the back of a truck on the way to work in the fields. Today he is an evaluator of teachers for the school system and a candidate for his doctorate. Esau's children became teachers, community workers, a lawyer, the administrator of a major health care delivery system on Johns Island.

Bill Saunders told us in 1965 that had he been born white, he might have accomplished something. He nevertheless has gone on to accomplish a

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

good deal. He founded the Committee on Better Racial Assurance (COBRA), a multi-issue community organization in Charleston also serving the sea islands. He has been chairman of the Charleston County Democratic party. He ran for state senate and received support in both the black and white communities. He is the owner of WPAL, a vital radio station in Charleston that consistently addresses social issues as well as responds to the musical tastes of the community. He was the principal mediator in the major civil rights campaign of the Charleston area—a strike of hospital workers in the late 1960s.

The job situation on Johns Island has improved slightly. In the 1960s all young people who finished high school left the area to find work. Now, with improved transportation, it is possible for them to work in Charleston and still live on the island. The resort developments and the new small businesses offer some employment, but farming, long a mainstay in the island economy, is steadily declining. Farmland is now the prime target of developers. But the people who have stayed on Johns Island have held onto a firm determination to live in their traditional community, and many of their hopes and dreams are still in place.

Development on Johns Island has taken two forms. Tourist development, spreading rapidly all along the coastal islands south of Washington, D.C., is a threat to the indigenous population on Johns Island. Kiawah and Seabrook, accessible only by driving across Johns Island, are full-fledged resort communities with condominiums, hotels and inns, shops and boutiques, and large private homes. Both are entered by passing through a security checkpoint. Viewed initially as offering some economic and social benefits to island residents, both have been disappointing, catering to wealthy visitors from outside the region and offering only menial and limited employment. Wadmalaw Island, just across the Esau Jenkins Memorial Bridge from Johns Island, is in the throws of plans for development. An island committee made up of black and white landowners has been meeting regularly to design their own development plan that may

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island.

871 563 the schools were integrated, and St. Johns, previously all white, became the high school for all island youngsters. Many white parents subsequently put their children into a private academy, but for the youth of the black community, St. Johns High offered new hope. Yet today the school system is still lacking. A desegregation suit against the county school system has been in federal court for six years. Brought by the Justice Department with the NAACP, it charges the Charleston County School Board with maintaining segregation and providing inadequate educational opportunities for minority students. [691] [668]

178 FOR NEARLY THIRTY YEARS two things have greatly impressed us about Johns Island. One is the continuing process of community education and struggle that enables local people to maintain some measure of control over their institutions and their lives. The other is the rich Afro-American cultural life on the islands. Given the pressures of development and economic survival, the need to address contemporary issues with sophisticated tactics, what will survive of the older sea island culture? Public interest has certainly grown in coastal culture, language, and history on both a popular and scholarly level. In addition, there have also been patterns of change in the community and the cultural choices made by island people.

545 The Moving Star Hall Singers, a family group who began traveling nationally when we lived on Johns Island, continues to travel and to share religious music, folktales, children's game songs, and life experiences in a range of settings. They are widely recognized as outstanding carriers of the oldest layer of Afro-American cultural expression in the United States. In more recent years they have been invited to perform in local situations, including the Spoleto Festival held annually in Charleston. In the summer of 1988 they performed at a national festival of Afro-American arts in Atlanta.

• 159 In 1984 Mrs. Janie Hunter received a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endow-

[P.XiV-B]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

•159 ment for the Arts. Here is how the NEA described her:

159 533

Sea Island people are noted for their retention of African cultural influences and for their creation of a rich body of game, work and religious songs, stories and craft skills. Janie Hunter is the matriarch of a family notable there for its musical artistry. Her voice is as strong and clear as a clarion bell and she carries in her memory a large repertoire of religious songs. Many of these came from her father, Joe Bligen, a fisherman and part-time farmer. Mrs. Hunter is an artistic decision-maker as well as a singer for the Moving Star Hall Singers, a group named for a Praise House on Johns Island.

[545]

The music heard in Moving Star Hall is joyous, a music in celebration of life, freedom, and a deeply felt religious optimism, the dawning of a better world. Mrs. Hunter and her friends and family sing not only with their voices, but with their hands and feet as well.

159

Like many other folk artists, Janie Hunter is multi-talented. She carries in her memory a collection of animal stories. They are for the amusement of children and adults, but they also show the uses of wit and logic. Mrs. Hunter is a maker of quilts and of dolls, a keeper of folk medicine techniques. She learned and remembered all these skills, and she is also an activist and transmitter. She has trained her children and the children of neighbors to respect and keep the beauty and artistic self-sufficiency of an important American place.

Mrs. Hunter felt she represented the island community when she was recognized for her cultural knowledge. When she traveled to Washington to receive the award, a vanload of family and friends from Johns Island went with her and joined in a jubilant shout as part of the Heritage award concert. When she returned to Johns Island, she was honored by her church, Wesley Methodist, and valued as a teacher in their own series on Afro-American heritage. Also recognized that same year by the NEA was a basketmaker from the Charleston low-country, Mrs. Mary Jane Manigault.

178 889

The older people will not lose their heritage. It is already too much a part of them. But they have

(P XV-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Betsy Pinckney

THAT WAS THE TIME WHEN PEACE DIDN'T DECLARE

569

My grandmother was Hannah Seabrook. She raised me up and told me a lot about Rebel Times. Old Hannah Seabrook was a cooker and a washer. Her first husband got sold. Yes sir! They sell my father's daddy. Sell him for money.

When my father was coming up he used to have to go see what old Master wanted him to do. He was just a boy and couldn't do none of that heavy work. So the old Master would have him shine he shoes. One day he found some finger marks on 'em and knock my father down the stairs. Good thing I wasn't living in those days--you would of had to kill me first. But that was in the time when peace didn't declare.

569
199

When the war came through, my daddy, Cyrus Jenkins, was just a young boy. That time he was in the creek--had to dig the mud and mud the field for what they gonna plant that year. My daddy just up and ran off with the Yankees. He followed the Yankee until peace declared. My grandma didn't see him for four years. When he come back Grandma went to the depot. When she see her one son she drop her little bit of clothes and bind the son. That's right, had only one raggedy soldier coat and nothing else but that.

Mrs. Betsy Pinckney

569
159

SHE TAKE THE SCRAP AND MAKE A LITTLE DRESS FOR ME

I born in 1878, the twentieth day of November. I was my ma's seventh child. Everybody run for give me name. I grow up in the white people house. I do the small things--I could thread needle for grandma, man. And they make me a little dress, you know. I even wash the Missus' feet. That's right, sir! That's right! Wash her feet in the basin. And when she was the only dressmaker 'round the village, she take the scrap and make a little dress for me.

My grandma had a scarf handkerchief--a white handkerchief she brought from Rebel Time, and when she died I tie he head with that. That's right. Yes ma'am!

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Belle Green

WE ALL TWO WORK

•159 I in my seventy-two. Then on the twenty-seven day of next year in August coming, I'll turn seventy-three years old.

When I married to Levy Green I was young. Me and him was married two years when the 1911 storm come. We raised on Johns Island--Levy home at Burden, the Clemmens' plantation, and my home is miles go down on that side. We didn't raise no children. I ain't got anybody. All my people dead out.

We all two work. I does work on the farm, in the field. Hoe work. Cabbage and white potato. We get three dollars a week. After I come down here I start to work with one man, and then I get so unpleasant and unfeeblish, he tell me, "If you can't work, I wouldn't look for you to work." I just give up. So painful old people now.

Levy used to work all about on the farm. He would take care of me if it the last thing he would do. Bus used to carry him all about to work. Then after he couldn't work no more, he give up. They put him on, you know--help. Wasn't much, but yet they put him on and we live by that. All of that done gone through. But I is a person don't complain. If I have anything I don't complain; if I have nothing I don't complain. It's no use. I just go on what God give me.

I thought I would done gone before Levy, 'cause I was the sickest one all the year through, but you see God took him and left me. Levy say, "Anna, don't you worry at all 'cause I going where Jesus is. Don't tell none I going, but I just go walk out."

I say, "Man, walk out where? Where you going?"

"I ain't going stay here no longer. You best try to go to the store and see if you can get something for your Christmas, 'cause I ain't go be here."

I say, "Man, hush your mouth; you talk like you don't know what you say."

He say, "I know what I say. By next Sunday I gone."

I say, "You can't know that. God only one know that."

He say, "All right then, you'll see." And he did so too. He died the fourth Sunday December, 1963.

I didn't know how old he is, but he tell me before he died, "I was born in 1880, December the twelve day." He live to be eighty-three. He was a good little man. Good little man. I have to say so 'cause I know. I sure miss him. He was all I had in the world.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

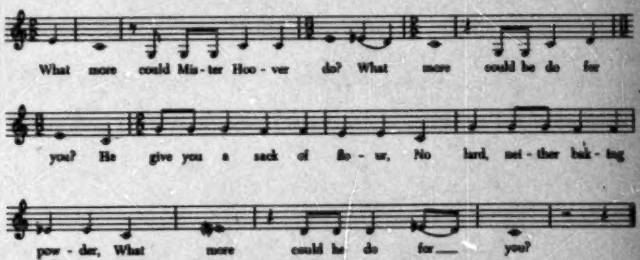
Mrs. Janie Hunter

THIS WAS A KINDA POOR COUNTRY

There were ten children in my family. Daddy was a foreman for Mr. Jenkins, and he have his own garden. I work in it. All work in it. Pick lima beans, pick cotton, tie the two cotton pod in the bag, and put a string on 'em, and hang the bag around your neck, and go to each one of those cotton bush, and pick the cotton, and stuff 'em in the bag. They was paying two cents a pound. Make thirty-five or forty cents a day. Man is getting forty cents a day.

We wasn't making enough to afford a good living. My daddy, he make a living out the creek. He catch fish and we go around and sells 'em—a whole string for ten cents. Me and my sister Florence, we goes around with white dishpan on we head and sometime make two dollars. And two dollars would give you a box of food that time, 'cause food was very cheap. You could buy three cent worth of sugar, and you get a whole big piece of fat meat like that for a dime. You get a sack of grits for about fifty cent. Food was much cheaper than it is now. That's how we make living. Plant plenty of sweet potato, plenty peas and corn, and raise hog.

Then we had flat flour. That's when President Hoover had chair. We had to go 'round to Mr. Walpool yard. They used to haul the flour there in one those big van truck, and load up his barn with this flour. Then all the colored and white had to line up and call by name, and they give you a bag of flat flour. 'Til we finally made a song out of it:


What more could Mis - ter Hoo - ver do? What more could he do for
you? He give you a sack of flo - ur, No lard, nei - ther bak - ing
pow - der, What more could he do for you?

Everybody so hungry, so want the flour. We have to mix the flour, didn't have no grease, no lard. Just put 'em in the pan and bake. Some people could afford to buy baking powder and fix it good. But who couldn't, just had to bake it—sprinkle some flour on the bottom of the frying pan so it won't stick.

But after he turned out and President Roosevelt took seat, then we began to live a little better life. I don't think just the Negro was glad; I guess some of the white too was glad when President Roosevelt took the chair. This was a kinda poor country.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Rev. G. C. Brown

THOSE WERE ROUGH DAYS

159
735

My wife and I've been here since '36. No pastor had lived here the last forty years before we came. And of course by not living with the people, they couldn't know their need and their desire. They wanted somebody to come and live with the people—that's why we came.

159
735
657
[465]

The first thing I found here was extreme poverty. That was during the days of the Depression, and there was no work except the WPA project. That white schoolhouse out there was built as a WPA project. The men on the farms were working for seven cents an hour. Oh yeah, seven cents. And the women, five cents.

735
657
462
241

The men plowed; the women did all the farm work. That time they didn't have planters to plant the potatoes. They cut the potatoes, dropped them in the field, and the men did all the work with the plows. That give pretty good farm employment. You had a number of men running plows, the women go along and drop the potatoes, and that give them a good day's work—several days' work in springtime. That give them employment during the planting season.

And the cabbage plant out by hand. Nowadays some have a planter. Some children worked then, but they didn't have too many children that time. There hadn't been so much marrying and going on.

735
[242]
[243]

Those were rough days. Food was short, scarce, didn't have much. The most they ate those days, they ate rice, grits and canned tomatoes. They bought their tomatoes at the store. They were cheap then. They bought the grits. Some made their own grits. They had a few mill. And they used to raise their own rice. There were a lot of rice farms around. They had a way of cleaning it and milling it.

735
432
226
434

Most of 'em were poor. Had no income. Very little income. They lived out of the creek. In the summertime they had crabs and shrimp, and in the wintertime had oysters. You could buy right at your door about three times a week, undressed shrimp—five cents a plate. In the wintertime we buy

735
291

[p.97]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Alice Wine

WE DO EVERYTHING FOR WESELF

Old times we never buy food. Man, you never used to buy nothing that time. Money use to never worry people but pay church and buy little things what you want or something like that. People raise the apple, they raise the fig tree, raise the plum, all kind of different thing. But now you got to see money. Money! You got to go for make money to buy. Is harder now. You got to work so hard to get a little bit of money. In that time you could get a quart of grits for two cents.

My daddy farm for heself. He raise he own food. We raise all vegetables. Something to keep in the barn in the winter. He plant corn, plant peas. He have sons plow. I do some too. And after we do all that, then they harvest 'em there in the barn. Then you ain't have to work in the winter.

Them times just a couple of stores, but you have to walk over seven miles to it. They sell food, but when you can plant your own, you make your own living. We have plenty chicken and have eggs and have plenty cows and have the milk. And my mother made butter—we own butter. Have we own churn and everything. Do everything for weself. So we never buy.

Those times people raise the tomatoes and the okra and can it, And they do that right now. They can it, they fix the bean, they dry the beans and the peas. They cut up the okra and they dry that.

My mother didn't never buy no kind of food. They make soap. They make plenty soap. But what they make it out, I don't know. They grind corn and make flour and grits. And we have the mortar and beat the rice. And meat, we kill the hog and put 'em in salt. End of the year, they put up hog. Kill the cow and have beef meat.

Daddy go in the creek and get we tub of fish—plenty fish that time. Get the fish out the creek—oshters, crab, mushel. Then we use to get them cookies five for a penny. Now cost penny a piece.

For clothes my daddy and mother they buy the cloth and make it. My mother had a machine and he do all his sewing.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mr. Joe Deas

WE BEEN CLIMBING ON THE ROUGH SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

159 735 From the time I have sense enough to recollect in this world, we have trouble and crosses, ups and downs. We been climbing on the rough side of the mountain,--climbing up, falling back, grabbin' bottom.

Way back yonder, in 1893, we had to work for something to eat. Work on the white folks' farm, move from place to place, eat with stick for spoon. (262) Got oshter, fish, crab and 'tato. Get corn meal, carry 'em to the mill and grind 'em and eat corn meal. Sweet potato. All that just to bring us this far. And I say thank God that I live to see light come into the world. Wise man from all part of the world come into *this* world. The world is lifting up more and more.

(501) My old parents didn't see these things--automobile, airplane. We come from rowboat time. Had to row from home to town and back. Sometime I have to stay a whole day; have to wait on the tide, all that to row. And God spare us live to see this day.

(492) (493) We used to drive with ox and cart, haul wood with old oxen, plow with oxen. All that. Today no oxen. Nothing but car and truck and bus and trailer and all kind of thing like that.

159 735 178 262 Old days you couldn't eat nothing but 'tato and peas and corn and corn flour and crab and all like them. Well these days it's Christmas every day. Anything you want now you get 'em. In them days back, if one somebody kill a hog in the community, you think it was Christmas by the hog only. But now, eat hog meat any day you want. Go from store to store to get the thing you want. It's Christmas every day now for we. Light come into the world. Them times we had to buy, and money was so little, you can't see your way to buy what you need for live. Had to make out 'til we leave the white folks' place and then start to come up.

735 178 It's a blessing we see the day. Everybody lifting up. God put a way to your brains to catch on to these things, that you may have bread to carry you 'til He ready for you. The world is comin' up and is wise and wise and wise, until we *all* can get some bread from God. Man ain't able to give 'em, God put 'em into that man that he can share 'around to the next brother.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island
137
493
34

Mrs. Betsy Pinckney

DON'T LET THE RAIN CATCH YOU

159
731

I remember in 1907 we had a tornado on Saxby place. I stand in my door, and my grandma say, "I going now." And I say, "Yes'm, Grandma, I see you going. Don't let the rain catch you." And you know, the wind pick up the house, just as natural as that. And it carry 'em about two tasks [a task is twenty-one rows in a field]. And my grandma lay down on the stomach and hold on to the wire fence, to the post. Yessir, I know that! And I there home whooping and hollering, "Oh Lord, that big air cloud carry Grandma!" That's right!

(804)

We had another storm in 1911. I cook peas and rice that day. It was a Sunday. Josh was laying 'cross the bed sleeping. I lean against that post and every time I feel that house shake, I say "Josh, get up. You better get up and see he going to storm." You see, I had seen one. Done gone 'cross one in 1886.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Rev. U. L. Brewer

I BEEN SWALLERIN' BITTER PILLS

159
735

I been swallerin' bitter pills and chewin' dry bones. In the old days they just give me cornbread and sweet potatoes, but still I could plow the hell out of their mules.

Mrs. Isabel Simmons

THAT'S THE WAY I COME UP IN THIS WORLD

159

I come up in a hard time, and I still having a hard time. I was the oldest one in the house, and I had all the work to do. When I was small they put me to tend corn—ten cents per task. Some day I do five task, some day I do six. Tend 'em. If there's two stalks in a hill you kill one off. In September we go and pick some weeds we call Morning Glory.

(243)
(859)

Sometime I use to have time to play on Sunday evening, but I couldn't go no place. I couldn't go no further than the house. I get cornstalk and make corncob dolly and play with dirt and spoon. I never went to no dance. My mother didn't allow us to leave the house. When they do have something like the Fourth of July or Labor Days, a big drum come from the city. Play drums and horn.

159
524
(529)

That's the way I come up in this world.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mr. James Mackey

WE IS HAD A DANCE

159 527 535 534 Dance! That's my favorite. In certain times of the year like Fourth of July or Labor Days, we is had a dance. Had guitar and all like that. First of all we used something called accordion, and we'd beat stick. Then after that we was enabled enough to buy something call tambourine. A man lived back in the woods used to play guitar. James White used to play fiddle. And another fellow and I used to assist him. When I don't feel like play awhile, I dance in on the set until it broke up. We didn't have this new style they got here now—hug together.

159 535 We dance eight in a group. Two on the head this side, two on that side, two on the side like that. The fellow who knock the tambourine, he teach the set. He says "swing to your left," then you come swing that. Then swing your partner, then swing home. Then he say "promenade all," they all hook hands, grab hands together and just soshay all around, 'til they get back to the place what they was.

Later on after these girls used to come from the city, then they used to dance hug together.

142 291

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

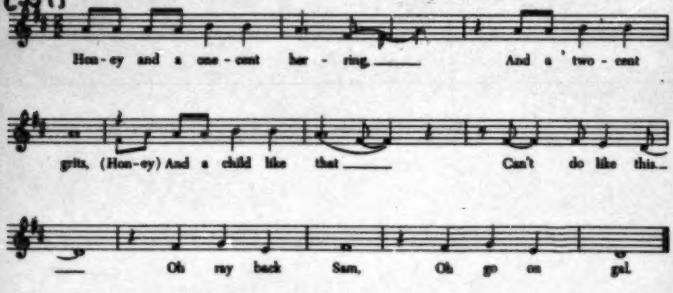
Mrs. Janie Hunter

WE DIDN'T 'LOW TO GO OUT AFTER DARK

159
535

When I was a young girl, we just used to go talk with friends, we didn't 'low to go out after dark. So the first time I went to a dance—that was 1932 when I first met my husband which is Willie Hunter—my mother tell 'em to have me back in the house by sundown. He took me to a dance at Miller-Hill, right over there where that water hole at. Mr. Charles Clemmens used to have a dance call a trap dance. It be drums and be washboard and all such music like that.

Used to have dances called Charleston, Pick Cherry, Alligator—get down on floor and do 'gator tap-tap, tap on your heel and toe—"One-Cent Herring, Two-Cent-Grits." Sometime two hook hand and go around. Call that a waltz dance. Some of these dance now is old-time dance, but they just change and give it a different name.

(533)
(534)

So when we get to the dance, the dance music was so good that we stays until about nine-thirty, and the water come across the road. The water come so high and I get scared. He have to put me on his back and tote me across the water. When we get back to the house, my mother smoke a pipe.

I was scared to go in. I said, "Willie, you best go in, 'cause I ain't going get a beating." My mother won't lick you before company.

So he went in, he says, "Mama, I'm sorry because we late. The tide was high across the road."

And my daddy, he is the first one to give in. He said, "Well, I know 'cause I go to the creek, and I know how that tide run."

I didn't say "good night." I sloop right in my bed. I was seventeen then.

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Betsy Pinckney

YOU GOT TO WORK LIKE THE DEVIL

159 Oh Jesus, that hoe! When I married to Josh, I couldn't lift the ground.
46 Didn't know nothing 'bout lift ground. Josh, he work in the field. Milk the
241 cow, then plow, man, plow. Sometime he dig the bed so wide if you reach your hoe, you better have a good long hoe stick.

(429) We used-to-work for our rent and our food. You got to work like the
(492) Devill Plant your cotton. Plant your corn. You have to work five task for that land and that house. Take oxen and plow. You have to work that 'fore you work your crop. That's you house. That's the rent. If he calls every week, you'll have to go.

159 In 1918 we move to our own place, where I am now. Josh go in the road
(412) and cut all them bush. Work with the ax and hoe. Some people carry the ax, some carry the hoe. Chop them bush. Cleared out the way for the cart and buggy come down. Then we had a crowd of children in there. And we had 'tato. When you throw 'em on the ground, just like somebody throwing dice on the floor. I had eleven head of children. And every one of my children had children. With the grands and the great-grands I have a hundred and forty-odd.

Mr. Willie Hunter

WE RAISE GOOD THAT TIME

I was raised right around here. Know the Bligens long before I ever marry they daughter. I know Bligen long time. My wife. All nice people. If they weren't nice people, I don't go in their family, I be in some other family. Nice people, man.

159 They like me too. 'Cause I have plenty manners to them. Course I raise
597 up that way, 'cause I raise up through the old school. Plenty manners. You had to have manners to them old people that time, 'cause in that time anybody could of lick you, you been sassy with any people. But now, we don't do that.

159 See if anybody lick me, outside my aunt what raise me, if I go home and tell Auntie that somebody lick me, I get some *more* lick. The best thing I do, keep my mouth shut and take what I get. Oh we raise good that time. Now things changed a whole lot. But I try to raise my children like I was raised.

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Betsy Pinckney

EACH LEAF ON THIS TREE WILL HEAL A NATION

159
787
[164]

I sick one time, in 1894. I sick 'til my mother and father give me up. Typhoid fever, gracious God! Oh that's a good God. I can prove it!

I was to go into the hospital the next day. There was a door, just like I looking on it now. I see a white man come through and walk just past my bed. He come and just look at me. Didn't say nothing, then go out. 1894.

And when the day was clean, the white gentleman come through the door again; I didn't know how he come in the house, but there he was. And he had on a blue gown, and hair drop on he shoulder. Yes sir! And he come to my bed, ask me, "What will you have me to do?"

And you know what I tell him? I say, "Please sir, could you read the fifteenth chapter and the psalm, 'The Lord Is My Shepherd'?"

He say, "Have you a prayer book?" Ask me just like I asking you a question!

I say, "Yes, sir."

He read the fifteenth chapter, the first six verse. Then after he done read that, he turn to the Twenty-Third Psalm, and he read it for me.

And he take me and he carry me down to a river. My spirit go on down to the river. Jesus! And when I get there, he said, "This tree bears twelve manna fruit. Every leaf on this tree will heal a nation." Gracious God have mercy!

Well sir, I wake up. I ain't seen when the man gone, but I know he come and carry me to that tree, down to that river side, and he tell me, "Each leaf on this tree will heal a nation."

159
781

Never sick so again yet! And that's the truth. Gracious God have mercy! Don't tell me don't serve God, because I going serve God until he say "well done." Yes ma'am, "well done."

4: Caravan & Caravan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Janie Hunter

THEY WORKED THEIR OWN REMEDY

159
957 We doesn't go to no doctor. My daddy used to cook medicine--herbs medicine: seamuckle, pine top, life everlasting, shoemaker root, ground moss, peachtree leaf, big-root, bloodroot, red oak bark, terrywuk.

Now when my children have fever I boil life everlasting; squeeze little lemon juice in it. Once they go to bed it strike that fever right away. That something very good.

And you hear about children have worm? We get something call jimsoy weed. You put it in a cloth and beat it. And when you done beat it, you squeeze the juice out of it, and you put four, five drop of turpentine in it, give children that to drink. You give a dose of castor oil behind 'em. You don't have to take 'em to no doctor.

159
152 If anybody fall down and break bone, my daddy get a towel and pour some water in the basin--put half a bottle of white vinegar in it. He hot the towel and bathe the leg in some mud. Go in the creek and get some mud, band that whole leg up in mud. Couple days you be walking. That knits it right back together.

For a cut, to stop 'em from bleeding, Daddy just get a big spoonful of sugar and throw 'em in there. He say once a cut stop bleeding it's not dangerous. Spider webs grow up in the house and you get that and tie 'em on
[237] Web grow right in there.

If you get sores you get something you call St. John out in the field. And you see those little bump grow on a gum tree; you get them and you burn them two together and just tie 'em right on that wound. That heals right up.

When my little boy got a nail stuck in his feet, I got a basin of hot water with physic salt and let him hold he feet down in that--draw the poison out. Then I tie a piece of butts meat on it. His foot get better.

159
757 You hear about some little thing run back in its hole--fiddler crab? We
825 use that for whooping cough. Catch the crab, boil 'em up with something else--I can't 'call the name--and strain 'em through a white cloth. Give that for drink. It'll cure the running whoop.

759 All this from old people time when they hardly been any doctor. People couldn't afford doctor, so they had to have and guess. Those old people dead out now, but they worked their own remedy and their own remedy come out good.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Belle Green

ALL MY OWN GONE

159 Sometime I stand here in the nighttime, ain't but me in one little room to sing. Then I study, you know, my mind run across, and he run on the old man. I just stop, sit down, and me heart get full. The other day I couldn't eat no supper. Me heart fill, and I feel full up the whole afternoon. Couldn't do nothing. I just maybe could of get a little bit wood then.

Now I can't testify like I used to. 'Cause I ain't able. My heart been bad for so long. I just trying to hold up. But they know me; all they at Moving Star Hall know me. I full of fire too. I been way down, but the Lord lift me up. Make me feel good the week out. I just pray to make my voice come back. Give me my voice back as I does been, one time before I die.

(659) When you get an old woman, and you can't go, the government take care of you. That's what got me today. Government got me.

Threescore and ten, that's seventy years I come to this day, but I ain't got much more. So I'm trying to be as close to the Man as I can now. But thousands and thousands have gone. All my own gone. Just a branch now, like a tree put out branch.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Alice Wine

I DON'T HAVE ONE DAY HOME

159
512

That's what I'm doing now—working in a kitchen. I get up around five o'clock now, get on my clothes, wash my face and wash up, and I'll go to the back yard and feed chicken. From that I come back and clean up my house, and get out in the road and catch a ride and go to work. And I get to work I take off my coat, my hats, put on a apron and a hat, and go upstairs and get towels, and I wash those towels and put 'em on the line and come back in, start to clean rooms, make up beds. Then after I done do all that, then I come in the kitchen, get something to eat, and home I go. Well sometime I be waiting from three to four hours catching a ride.

I come back do a little work home, and leave from there to go on down to the Progressive Club and stay down there until about nine-thirty, ten o'clock, when it's a clear day. But when they having these party we don't leave 'til two and three in the morning. Get up next morning, go back on the job again. I don't have one day home.

On Sunday, go to church. I get up in the morningtime, get wash up and go outside feed my chicken and water 'em, and take my feet and go on down to the club and open 'em up. I be there around 'bout 'til eleven-thirty, catch a ride and go to church.

Come from church, I'll come back home and get dinner, and from there I go to the society meeting. Then the same Sunday evening we go to the hall to prayer meeting.

I don't have but a couple hours in everything I'm doing. But when I leave from home and come to someone house, like I here with you all now, I'm resting. And when I go home there's no rest. Something there for to do. Ain't nobody pushing me 'round; I'm pushing myself. I see it to do and I got it to do, so I just do it.

I don't care how hard I work in the day, if I get my night rest, it just like I ain't work that day. I get up that next morning, I don't feel it. But what put me down if I don't get my night rest. I get tired and don't feel like going. If I go to bed 'round seven-thirty, eight o'clock, I get up the next morning I don't feel nothing.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mr. Joe Deas

I BEEN GOING IN THE CREEK FOR FORTY-ODD YEARS

•159
226

Fishing, yeah man, I been doing that for years. Get 'em with net; get 'em with line. Go down and push the boat overboard, go to bail 'em-out, and go out casting. We go to Hut Creek, Willis Creek, then out to the sea. Gre... Lord, that's miles and miles out there—way out past the place they call Kiawah, then go out to the south. Get your whiting and trout. For mullet you go in the night. Course if you got a net, then you can go in the day and catch shrimp.

[286]
227
[824]

I make nets—knit 'em with cord and needle. Make my needle out of wood, board, tin. You can make 'em out of palmetto—take a branch of palmetto and cut 'em out of that. I make all most things myself—boat, net, two-wheel cart. If you ain't got that, you have to ride the ox

I do everything from the time I could turn around for myself. I been going in the creek for forty-odd years. Catched a ton of fish. Gone around and sell 'em to different people—make a living. I gone and got a license. Have to go to customs house and get license to go in the creek—get the fingerprint and all. When you come back from the creek, if you don't have enough to sell, you got enough for your family to eat.

[432]
[434]

That's the way we had to struggle in this world. But thank the Lord, we're here yet.

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Alice Wine

I CAN'T STAND TOO MUCH SITTING DOWN

159 461 If I be sitting down and don't have nothing to do, I get stove up. I get painful and lazy. I can't stand too much sitting down. I likes to go. You must be always active. You miss and sit around all day, lay around all night, you're so painful 'til you can't hardly get up. But you be working all the time, get your nerve together, get your vein together, then your muscle won't lock. (826) Lot of people muscles lock by sitting down so much. No sit down for me. I likes to go.

I do any kind of job. I can plow, I can cut wood, I can sew, I can iron, I can scrub, I can do any kind of work in the field.

159 512 My husband was a farmer. He was a market man. He run a big farm. We have plenty chickens, plenty cow—two cow, and hogs. He get up and go to the market 'round two-thirty in the morning. Then I get up, put my baby to sleep, and get out there. Sometime we have these Columbia truck come in all time of night. These white people come in and carry these cabbage and thing. I'd be out there with them around four o'clock in the morning. After they go I come back to the house to see about the baby, then get in the tub and wash. Do all my washing, do my house cleaning, cook meals, have meals on time, cut cabbage, crate 'em too, pack 'em too.

159 I'm gone through a rough deal, but I thank God I'm still living. And I was doing those things in my nineteen and twenties. I'm fifty-nine now. So I'm not no baby!

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mr. Benjamin Bligen

I DO MY OWN WORK NOW

159 ●

The first work I used to do was work on our own farm. I worked to help my father because they really had a hard time to raise us, and we just had to go out and do what we could to help in them days. We had to plant a garden.

Then my daddy was a fisherman, and I began to go in the river along with him and he teach me how to throw net, so I finally learn how to. And (826)

226
227
50

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 226 he teach me how to paddle a boat. After he died, I took it up myself. I did the same thing: go in the river and catch some fish and sell it. Most of it is mullet fish, mullet and spots, and some catfish, all different kinds. Cast net. Run from three to four feet deep to maybe sometimes seven to eight feet deep. I go by myself or with my brother.

159 (335) (484) I began to do some carpenter work too. I was working along with a carpenter, and after a time I began to learn how to do some of the work for myself. So I finally try alone, and I made it all right. I do my own work now. I'm working at a block and pipe company—making door lintels and window lintels, all different kinds of stone.

(434) (241) The best kind of money people can make is on electricity works and chanical works and maybe expert carpenters and bricklayers. Harvesting season in the fall, you can't make much because it's only about three or four weeks long. You can do all right for those three or four weeks. You can make it anybow. But 'round May and June, that's about the best months of the year on the farm. October you start having maybe some string beans. Then you sit 'til next year in May and June.

Mr. Benjamin Bligen
MORE LIGHT IS SHINING

I am forty. The look of the pudding is not the taste all the time. I have two children. I have a better time raising mine than my parents had raising us. Foods went up a lot, but still you can make it a little better now than you is in past time.

More light is shining. Can see more. Likewise you can do more and think more, 'cause I believe that more light is shining now than was shining in the past. And so help me God, I so glad that I can see some light. And I know there's more light for me. There is a bright light somewhere and I'm going to find it.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Janie Hunter

I SEEM TO MAKE IT ALL RIGHT

159
511
434 When we first bought that piece of land in 1940, my husband was making thirteen dollars a week. I was washing and ironing for two person, and I wasn't making over three dollars a week. And we had to buy the land off that, and build that same house which burn down with that money, plus raise children. But I seem to make it all right. I get used to it. I get four dollars a day now, and it still don't seem much easier. Food cost more, clothes cost more, and the children takes more to go to school.

159
511 But the Lord didn't promise no human being to eat grass. Only horse and hogs eat grass. So he have a way paved for all those children, and we's had, if it be just one good meal a day. And I raise all of 'em up--hard time and good time--all is a healthy family. Didn't have no trouble 'til I lose my baby a year ago, and he wasn't sick but two days. But with the Lord, all things possible. And God give and He takes, and He takes nothing but His own. I know all those children belongs to the Lord, and He only give it to me for a special time. And I feel like He wants me to keep them children, He make a way for feed them. As the song say, "feed you when you hungry, and He clothes you when you naked." So up to this present minute I can say I have thirteen children living, and I thank God for all of them, and they is good children.

142
291

[5.5]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Janie Hunter

THEY WANT ME TO TALK ABOUT THE PAST

159 I tell you, young people got a lot chance to think more in their age than
178 I had to think in my days. 'Cause I couldn't think 'bout nothing but plant
867 peas and corn in my days. But now these children got so much different
869 thing to go through and learn, and they got nice schools. If they don't learn,
869 it's nobody's fault but their own. Then I try to teach them these stories and
824 different song and let them know what blues was like in my days coming
up. My children like it. They sit down and they want me to talk about the past. They enjoy hearing it. I want them to know about it, so when I gone there be somebody to carry it on.

Mrs. Isabel Simmons

LIFE IS VERY DIFFERENT NOW

178 The old times was hard, but we still need religion right now. Life is
829 very different now.
[791] There is so much television here now; you didn't had that. It don't make
178 life easier for me; it make 'em hard 'cause people stay home more. Lot don't
829 go to church and different thing because they stay for see story. In them
209 time only story you would hear tell, you tell your own story. This time, you watch television for story.

And the children now, they watch the TV and they take the thing on the TV to do just what they doing now. They think what is on the TV is real. But them time there doesn't be that kind of killing and shooting and cutting up like what going on now. Once in a while you hear about somebody die, but don't never hear about nobody get killed.

Mrs. Alice Wine

EVERYBODY SITTING ON THEIR OWN STOOPS

178 'Course that day, coming in 1919, all around like that, people was more
829 friendly to one another. People come and sit with you and read the Bible.
571 But these days you don't find anybody come visit. Everybody sitting on their
574 own stoops. You don't find nobody to my house. When you're sick, people used to go around and have meeting for you and pray for you. Now the people who live in the house with the sick people got to come and ask somebody come pray for them. But before, people know you is sick. Not now. That's done pass.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 was there. I didn't have no partner to pick up potato with, so he say, "Come
589 on; I'll be your partner." So we was partner for the day, picking up potato until over with. And when I get 'round about fifteen, sixteen years old, he come to my house and ask my mother can he keep my company. My mother ask me, will I accept it. First I say I don't know. So he come back and come back. And finally he wrote my mother a letter. Mother call me, she ask me, will I accept Arthur Lee company. So I say yes.

Those years keeping company I doesn't go out with no fellas, but I does see other boys, talk to them, go out to a party my brother be along. But I never love but one, and that's the one I get married to.

159 Now I'm twenty-five. I have five children. I work from seven in the
401 morning 'til five-thirty in the evening—five days a week doing kitchen work. I mind five children, and when I get home I got to take care of five of my own.

My husband leave home 'bout six in the morning for he to wait on the road for a ride to go to work. He don't have he own transportation. He works out on contractor job, 'round about four years now.

(465) It's tough to raise five children—sure is. My husband make 'round thirty, sometime forty dollars a week. And if it rain he don't bring in that because he don't work. I get paid for holiday when I'm off, but my husband don't get paid. He just have to wait it out. My mother used to take care of (855) the children that aren't in school before the house burn down, but now I don't have anyone to take care of them. I have to stay off from work and start all over housewife again.

142
291
302
524

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Janie Hunter

IT'S A SMALL PLACE, BUT I RATHER HAVE ALL MY FAMILY TOGETHER

●159
931
[354]

I lost my house, a seven-room house, but I feel like it is the Lord's will. 'Cause I was burning oil stove from '41 up to now, and this have never happen to me before.

One day I went to work. I wash Tuesday night and leave a tubful of clothes for my daughter who always takes care of the house, and I told her to hang the clothes out. So she take my little battery radio in the yard under the tree, and she was hanging up the clothes, and when she look up, she saw smoke. She ran back to the house, but she couldn't even get in; the fire knock her back. She remember one of my little grand was sick in the house, and all she could do is run in the house and grab her. My son Johnny grab the rest of the children and take 'em over to my neighbor house and somebody call me.

One of my neighbor call me on my job, and my lady brought me home, must be about seventy mile an hour. I didn't feel so bad then, 'cause I thought fire engine would save at least some the furniture, but then I could see the housetop was falling in.

Then when everybody was together talking, I was sitting off by myself on Moving Star Hall, was thinking what would be best. I didn't feel like going anywhere far from the neighborhood. I have different friends offer me to come stay with them, and Mr. Jenkins, the place I raise on, he had a little empty house there, but I didn't want to go there either. I always want to be close to my meeting—Moving Star Hall.

So my neighbor, Nancy Field, she give me this little place she had built for the Florida people when they come. Those Florida people, they come 'round every year for season to pick tomatoes and thing, and she kept that little place for them. They just stays in it for a season—they'll stay any kind of where, you know.

It's a small place, but I rather have all my family together. If all of us have to sleep in one bed, I rather have all together. She kept manure and corn and all such of things in there, and all the rat been in there, but I was happy for it. I just get out and by my children, daughters, son, husband,

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 they help me, and couple days we had it clean out, so now is clean enough
73 to sleep in and eat in. We just work night and day. I sit up 'til two o'clock
some nights. My son Johnny, he makes two window so it's light now. Then
354 we go and buy a wood heater so it's very warm and comfortable.
159 We getting 'long all right. I realize God give and He takes. He take down and He can build back up. He took everything from Job--wife, children, Job have seven boys. His wife say Job ought to curse God and die. But Job say, "You speak as a foolish. When I curse my God and die, what will become of me? But I'll wait on my appointed time until my change will come." So I'll wait, 'cause I know soon or late there will be some change. If you only got faith in God, won't have nothing to worry about.

And everybody was so nice to me, and that one important thing make me feel good. All my friends from here and everywhere come and give; those who don't have to give, come with a word of encouragement. I appreciate everything they did. My brothers, my sisters, my daughters, friends, what they don't have to give, they come and sit and talk and sing together encouragement, and this make me understand that this is the Lord will.

142
302
291

4: Caravan & Caravan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
HN23 Sea Islanders HN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mr. Benjamin Bligen

I REALIZE I'M HERE FOR SOME PURPOSE

159 794 I was about twenty-seven when I start to go to Moving Star Hall regular. Since I was a little boy, Mom used to take me there on her back—I was so small to walk in the dark, you know.

159 794 11 532 869 There was a time when blues was all that was on my mind. But the truth is the light, and after getting old in age I realize that I'm here for some purpose. Father always teach me the Bible, teach us how to sing and how to pray, and tell us what must not do and what must do to inherit life everlasting. So I stop and ask myself some question. Then I just had to change from singing blues and begin to go back to what my old parents said—singing spiritual songs.

And I found out that's better.

Mr. William Saunders

THIS IS GOOD, BUT IT DOESN'T HELP YOUR EATING

159 794 796 786 878 We all as kids went to Moving Star Hall. As far as I was concerned, I just had to be there. We used to enjoy the singing and the shouting. And at a certain period of the night, all the youngsters in there had to go up front and kneel down and everybody prayed. That place used to be full—three nights a week. You couldn't get in that place if you be late on Sunday nights. And it was so much young people. All of a sudden it just start dying off.

159 791 198 889 794 796 For one thing most of the young people started going away. Like me, I went in the Army. I was about fifteen. Once the kids start going to different places, and we start to be more enlightened, then we start getting away from this old type of thing. As we get more education, we come to find out that this wasn't the type of thing we needed to help us through the world. We needed more than this. This is good, but it doesn't help your eating. Why waste time with something that you aren't gonna get anything out of at all? You gonna be looking forward to when you die, and man, you hungry now.

That Moving Star Hall business just about died out completely. Then they started building it back up again. Now some of the people, the Moving Star Hall Singers, are enjoying some of the fruit of their labor.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Rev. G. C. Brown

THE STRUGGLE HAS COME WITH ESAU

He's a self-made man--what you call pulling up by your own bootstraps. Everybody here live practically on the same level, but Esau is in a class all by himself.

When we first came to Johns Island in '36 I saw there was a future for Esau. He used to come to me for night teaching. I taught him, right here in my house, to continue his English and grammar and reading. Then, when he stopped coming here, he went to night school at Burke in the city and developed and increased his knowledge.

There's not another one here like him. I knew his father. He belonged to this church, but his father was not that type of person. He was the kind of "you doing too much, Esau . . . ." You know.

We have a civic organization here on Johns Island and Esau is the president. He's tried to let other people take over, but we elect somebody, he serve maybe three months and give it up, and Esau just have to take it back over again. That's why he's stayed in office so long. Others become discouraged and quit. But he hasn't ever become discouraged. He just work on through.

There's always two groups when somebody like Esau builds himself up--one that appreciates and another that doesn't think too well of it. I think now most everybody sees what he's done and I don't think he has

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 518 much opposition. But he had opposition to begin with--opposition from his own people. They went to the white people, and they gave him hard knocks, but he kept right on persisting; didn't never stop. But now they see he's going to make it anyway, so they just decided to let him off.

One reason people criticized Esau so much, they afraid he going too fast. They been resigned to their fate most of them, and satisfied with that. The struggle has come with Esau. Esau has advocated justice, and don't be satisfied until you get justice.

159 199 There's been a great awakening through television and through the news media. They all begin to know now that we've been treated wrong for a long time. They are more conscious of that every day now. And you'll find a greater desire on the part of the individual to get some of the good things of life. But now, people still don't help Esau as much as they should. The prophet is without honor in his own country.

Mr. Esau Jenkins

159 829 **AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?**

Long years ago I ask myself a question, Am I my brother's keeper? And the answer that I got was, You are. So then I decided to myself, since I'm no better than anybody, I don't feel I'm any worse than anybody. I decided to do anything I can to help people in order to help myself.

I have two question asked to me by other people. The first question was, how was I able to educate five children and live, born and raised on Johns Island--have never taught a school in my life, have never work for the government--and they all have made good grades in school, and they have been very mannerable to everybody. The way you raise your children, you can make 'em be lovable in this world, or you make 'em be hated by people, so it's your responsibility. Since God is kind enough to give you a child, then you ought to raise 'em the way he should go.

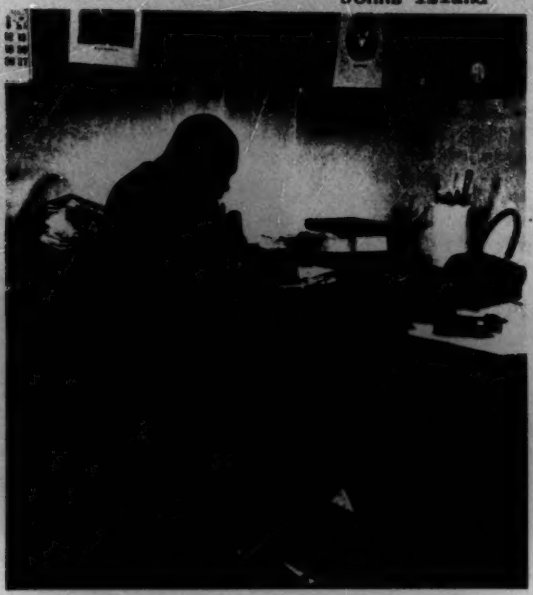
Then a man came to me and ask me, said, "Look, I notice them buses you have look so nice, and I understand you have sent all your children to school and you have gotten some property you own and doing some business. Where do you buy your hoodo root from?"

[189] Now you know that's silly. Hoodoo business. That's the thing that make people poor, because they believe in root. So I said to him (I didn't have the answer right away because I might have said something bad to him), but I said, "Look friend, where I got my root from, it only takes obedience and a simple mind to go home and go into your closet and get on your knees and ask God for what you want."

And I tell you one thing: every progress that I have made in life, it came to me while I was doing some good for somebody.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

142
291
352
353



Mr. Esau Jenkins

THEY PAINTED IT BLACK

159
872

I haven't gotten any further than the fourth grade in grammar school here. I had to work, and because of that I had to leave school. And then too, the school we had here wasn't encouraging to go to. We had around fifty children and one teacher with a one-door school.

(179)

And beside that, they painted it black, that we could be identified as to who go to the school. It discouraged me when I got some pride. I left school and went to Charleston and started working on a boat. But I still was serious about getting my education. I know I couldn't have done anything out of a fourth-grade education.

159
873

Then I got married some years later and find out that I have a great responsibility, and I know that my education was limited. So I decided that I would work and go to school at the same time. I went four years more, which help me to transact my own business, and now I'm happy to say that

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 I was able to have my children educated. One son is a captain in the Army, 813 one a navigator in the Air Force, two daughters are teaching, one son is a professor of music.

And now there are other folks on this island being encouraged to send their children to get a higher education. We know that some day in the near future Johns Island will be a better place to live.

Rev. G. C. Brown

159 185 813 **ESAU STARTED THE MOVEMENT, WITH HIS OWN CHILDREN IN A LITTLE TRUCK**

When I came here thirty years ago, there was no chance for any schooling beyond the fifth and sixth grade. Esau started the movement by going into Charleston, with his own children in a little truck, taking them to Burke High School.

Then the County eventually consented to pay the tuition at Burke for all who graduated the eighth grade here. And the load kept increasing as the nine little schools on the island educated a group every spring. So they decided it would be better to go ahead and build a school over here with the people, and consolidate rather than to pay this tremendous tuition cost and transportation to Charleston. And that's how Haut Gap High School came to be here.

Esau started it. He's the originator of it. They might not give him credit for getting that school built, but I know 'cause I was here.

Mr. Esau Jenkins

159 **IT'S GOOD TO DO YOUR OWN FIGURING**

465 241 I shall never forget those days when I have worked long on the farm—for fifty cents a day—plowed, lined out straight rows to spread fertilizer in, and come back and put the potatoes in the trench and cover it up.

At that time I was about eighteen or twenty years old. I married when I was seventeen, and because I felt like that wasn't any kind of money to support a family with, I left and went to work somewhat for myself.

My father was a farmer and a carpenter. He was doing carpenter work when he was much younger, and he tried to teach me how to do it. I worked with him for a while, but I didn't like carpenter work too well. I imagine I

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 was a little bit lazy, that kind of thing. But my father was very smart in carpentry. He built a house in a few days if you just give him the material. But then as he got older he turned more to farming.

159 My father was a man believe in whatever the white folks said. He didn't
197 want to hurt them a bit. I know after I start farming with him, one day we
803 went to carry some cotton to sell. The white man who figured what the cotton come to, he gave us a certain price. I started to figure mine.

Daddy told me, "Don't do that. The white folks never like that, Son."

I say, "Well, I'm not figuring for the white folks at this point, I'm figuring for my own benefit."

Well, he never figured, but I figured mine. Unfortunately, mine was wrong when the white man figured, but I wouldn't take it. I waited until everybody got the money, including my daddy, and I went to him. "According to what you paid me, my money didn't come to what it should come to for the amount of cotton I had."

So he said, "Well, let me see." Sure enough, he found out that he made a mistake.

But now if I said that before everybody, there might have been everybody who was there think that his own was wrong too. And everything might have been, but I *know* mine was wrong. And I certainly glad I was able to figure.

I told my daddy, say "Now Daddy, you see I don't know how long this man doing it, but this figuring was wrong, and I don't know how many other person was wrong, but I didn't say it because I was afraid that everybody would say the same thing, and then he would blame me for it. But can't you see it's good to do your own figuring?"

Of course, I convince him at that time, but he never would do it.

159 *Mr. Esau Jenkins*

THEN I NOTICE THE GREEKS

(248) I planted cotton for about four, five years--my father and I together.
(241) It takes one whole year to harvest cotton. Then my mind tell me to start with vegetables. Then most of the people start on vegetable farming--truck crop farming, where you can plant three vegetables a year, no doubt four. That's what prompt me to buy a truck.

159 Then I notice as I go into the city to sell my vegetables, most of the
177 stores are operated by Greeks. They buy all kind of vegetables. So I thought
432 the best thing for me to do then is to try to learn the Greeks' language. I could sell more stuff and help me to do more business and help my family better. So I went and took Greek. I took Greek for about a year and a half

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159
177
[432] or two, and I was able to understand the Greek language in everyday speaking in business, and that helped me to go on. That is the thing that helped me to educate most of my children.

Mr. Esau Jenkins

HERE'S A MAN BEING SHOT FOR A DOG

159
177
682 Two evil things that happened motivated me to get involved in my work on Johns Island. In September of 1938 two Negroes were riding in a truck. A dog ran out of a gate. The man driving tried to avoid it, but he couldn't, he hit the dog and killed it. The dog's owner, a white man (he wasn't a native of Johns Island, but had come here to live), jumped in his own car, and he carried a shotgun and ran this man down.

The fellow who wasn't driving tried to plead with him, ask him not to shoot him because he didn't mean to run over this dog, but he shot this fellow dead.

The family got a white lawyer from Charleston to try to bring that case in the court, and from 1938 until this present time, nobody heard any more of that case.

Well, that's something that I felt like people who have good will and think about decency and human dignity should do something about.

Then in the early '40s a white man, Mr. Malone, move from Mississippi onto Johns Island. He was sixty years old, his wife was twenty. They had a female dog and as a rule at certain times of the year, several dogs will go around these homes with female dogs. For some reason her dog was across the street one morning at a Negro man's home. She heard her dog's voice hollering as if somebody was beating the dog, and she went over and asked this Negro man by the name of Sammy Grant if he put his dog on her dog.

He said, "No, I didn't."

She said, "Yes, you did."

And he said, "Whoever said I put my dog on your dog tell a damn lie."

So she went back home, and we don't know what she told her husband.

Every morning Mr. Malone caught a truck about seven o'clock to go to work. The next morning, when the truck came by, he stopped it and called to Sammy Grant. By the time Sammy came around by the tail of the truck, Mr. Malone shot him right there. He was so close, and with a 12-gauge gun, this boy bled a lot.

The man who owned the truck stop a car and rush him to the hospital. By the time he got there, he had bled out the blood that would keep him alive, and the doctor asked this man to rush out and get some blood right away, 'less he was going to die.

The man came down to the city market where people sell the vegetables to find the guardian of this boy or the mother to try to get some blood,

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 or try to get some money to buy blood for him. She said she didn't have any
171 money. Everybody was standing around saying it was wrong, he should
682 not have been shot. But I said, "Are you trying to help this boy? You can't listen to people say it's wrong. If they feel sorry for the boy they'll go down and give him blood."

I said, "Wait a minute, I'll get two of my brother-in-laws and I will go down and give him blood." So we went down. I gave the first pint and my two brother-in-laws gave the other two pints and save his life.

I ask him to tell me the truth what happened. I said to him, "Sammy, just as I gave you my blood to save your life, I will spend every dime and make sacrifice for you to help bring this thing to justice through the court." And he told me just what I've said.

So I went on Broad Street and hired a lawyer. He ask me to find a hundred dollars because he said he have to hire a stenographer to carry to Johns Island. The magistrate might not stick to the word he said in the court, so he need somebody to keep a record.

For a long time we heard nothing about the case. Finally I called up this lawyer and ask him what's wrong. I fussed at him a long time. Then we heard from the other man's lawyer that he wanted to make some kind of deal with Sammy. And we went and met with this lawyer.

I told him, "Mr. Malone shot Sammy with malice of forethought. Now I realize that it's a bad thing to call a woman a liar, but I don't think a man should be shot down for calling somebody a liar."

I said, "You know we have had one man shot dead over a dog and nothing came of it. The family paid a white lawyer to look out for the family and bring this thing to trial and nobody heard anything from it yet. Here's another man being shot for a dog. Now this is bad for race relations."

I told him if he were to come to Johns Island, with one man shot outright and another shot and left for dead, he might not be safe—and he could be ever so right, but because of the things that happened, Negroes began to get malice in their heart for white folks. We can't afford to let things like that go on. We, as people who know better, should make it better and make race relations better.

So he decided to pay us what Sammy had lost. He said that he hadn't felt like he was going to lose the case, but if he had won the case in court and then heard what I had just told him afterward, he never would have felt himself justified.

159 These are the things, then, that motivated me to organize in 1949 a pro-
185 gressive movement, that we could help the people to be better citizens, give them a chance to get a better education, and know how to reason and look out for themselves, and take more part in political action.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mr. Esau Jenkins

"MR. JENKINS, I WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO BECOME A REGISTERED CITIZEN."

159
641
666
212
185

On Johns Island, in the year of 1948, I saw the condition of the people who had been working on the plantations for many years. And I knew that we were not able to do the things that would need to be done unless we could get people registered citizens.

I operated a bus from Johns Island to Charleston carrying people to their jobs. So I decided to get a group in the bus in the mornings and teach them how to read the part of the Constitution that we have to read before we are able to become registered citizens.

One of these mornings I was teaching the group to read the Constitution, a woman by the name of Alice Wine said to me, "Mr. Jenkins, I would like very much to become a registered citizen, but I cannot read this Constitution because I did not get but just so far in school, and I cannot pronounce these words. But if you are willing to help me, I will show you that I would be one that would be willing to vote in every election."

So I decided to pay more attention to her, and I helped her at more times than I do the regular times when we have school in the bus, to get her prepared to register.

Mrs. Alice Wine

EVERYBODY READ AND GET A PAPER

I come around to registering through Mr. Esau Jenkins. I used to ride his bus, and he said, "I want to carry you down to register." I said, "I can't read those hard thing yet," and he get the book and he start to learn me.

He start to help me read and when I get to them hard words I feel like jump it. My tongue so heavy until I couldn't pronounce the words, you know. But he said to me, "No, the hard word is the things for you to learn." And so me and them girls (and some of the girls could read 'em—dum-de-dum-dum-dum—right on through, right on through, but I couldn't do it), we tried 'em.

Then he take we up to a registration board on Society Street, and we get in line. Everybody read and get a paper, read and get a paper. And I be in line next to this girl, and she read and she stammer. And then the man put me for read, and I read those things just like I been know 'em. And I didn't know them things, I swear!

Mr. Jenkins figure I going fail. He been right outside there on the corner for listen. And when I come out he said, "Miss Wine, you get it?" I say, "Yes, sir." Say, "Well, sir!" I say, "I thought I couldn't read them hard thing." Them thing was *too* hard!

4: Caravan & Caravan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mr. Esau Jenkins

EVERYBODY IS JUBILANT FOR THE HIGHLANDER FOLK SCHOOL

159 641 666 185 The Negroes outnumber the white here 'round about two and a third to one. The potential voting strength for Negroes is about two thousand against around one thousand white, if we could get them all registered. They have been doing it much faster now, because I know the last ten years before the new registration started, it took us ten years to get seventy-five or a hundred person registered, and then starting back in 1957–1958 it got better. Since then we put nearly four hundred people on the books. They are civic-minded now, and they want to take part in it. I think so much progress has been made in the last few years due to the citizenship school that was started here by the Highlander Folk School.

159 873 185 I first attended Highlander in 1954. They asked each individual to give the immediate problem in his locality. My immediate problem was adult education, because so many person were here who couldn't read and write and I know this condition, because I would have been almost in the same condition if I didn't go back to school. So I asked the Highlander Folk School officials if it were possible to help us set up night schools for these people to help them become better citizens.

They said if I could find a place, could find a teacher, they could help take care of the expenses. So they did. And that was very, very important to helping us to get as many persons registered on this island.

159 666 873 185 And then people on Wadmalaw and Edisto Islands found out later the reason Johns Island was so successful in registering Negroes. They ask me if it's possible to help them to get an adult school. So the next year when I went to Highlander, when it comes time for immediate problem again, I brought in Wadmalaw and Edisto, and they again say they will help if I could find a place and the teachers. I found the place, and today Wadmalaw registered more Negroes than ever registered in the history of Wadmalaw. In the 1964 election Wadmalaw had about two hundred Negro votes for Johnson. Most of the white folks were voting for Goldwater, but Negroes voted enough to hold it in the Democratic column. That's the only area in Charleston County that went for Johnson.

The same thing is happening on Edisto and all over the county. In 1954 in the county there were 'round about five or six thousand Negroes registered. In 1964 almost fourteen thousand. So everybody is jubilant for the Highlander Folk School, who have helped them to see the light.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mr. Esau Jenkins

KNOWING HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

159 873 641 666 185

We had gotten quite a few people registered through that adult citizenship school, but they did not have the political education or understanding of voting. So we decided to teach them what the ballot means. I started what we called the "second step" political education school, because the people who registered to vote would vote because we told them to vote.

There were many persons who did not know how many men in the House of Representatives; why Charleston County has eleven in the House; how many men in the Senate; how many congressional districts we have in South Carolina; who are the men elected and sent to Washington to represent these two districts. We feel that if these people know about these things, they will be more interested in voting, and they will help others.

As you know as well as I do, that if a person doesn't know a football game, a basketball game, neither a baseball game, he hears other people laugh and sees how other persons play, but he doesn't know *who* plays well, because he doesn't know the game.

The same thing goes with some of the people who don't know anything about political action, so we felt like it was our responsibility to teach those people and have them well-informed.

159 873 185 (666)

Along with political education, we have taught a good many persons how to sign checks, fill out money orders, how to crochet, how to sew, how to fill out blanks for their drivers' licenses. I think it was a great success.

Then after I was elected President of the Citizens' Committee of Charleston and Charleston County, I set up what we call a voter registration and information center, to which place people will come in for information. Whatever information they need, they come to this center.

142 302 291

[p. 151]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mr. Esau Jenkins

"MAN, ESAU JENKINS' NAME ON THE VOTING MACHINE!"

159 666 871 Then I ran for the school trusteeship on this island. I ran knowing that I wouldn't have won unless a miracle had been done. They had three white persons to run. I made four. And I came out third, so I got more votes than one of the white candidates. That scared some of the white folks here, and the man who is on the county council decided that they would change voting for trustees on the school board. They would have it be appointed because Johns Island strength was growing too much.

The reason why I ran is because I wanted the Negroes to know that it is their privilege to go into any office they're qualified to handle. They are taxpayers and they have just as much right to run for public office as the white persons. I ran because some Negroes thought that if a Negro name ever was placed on a voting machine, that person would be killed. Or they thought that a Negro's name couldn't be placed on a voting machine.

159 666 And so I ran and my name was placed in alphabetical order and they saw it. And when one of the guys went in and saw my name, he went and told the rest, say, "Man, Esau Jenkins' name on that voting machine," says, "You better go on down there and vote." And that year we had about ninety-nine percent of the Negroes who registered vote. Encourage them ever since to vote.

Mr. Esau Jenkins

WE'RE NOT FOR SALE

(661) After we got started and the Negroes started registering, then a bribe was made to me. They sent someone to offer me whatever I want if I would stop teaching Negroes to register and vote and go along with the white folks. Well, I didn't accept it.

159 871 661 185 My argument at that time was that we need a high school on Johns Island and we need to get our children off their feet who are walking ten miles per day to try to get an education. They walk in the rain, in the cold, and the sleet and we believe it cause a health hazard. So I told this man who offered me the money, "We're not for sale, and we're only going to support

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

185
159
87
(661)

people who are willing to see to it that our children will get a high school, plus transportation to take them to and from school."

159
87
197
185
(875)

The white kids were riding in school buses, and the buses were warm when they got into it. When they got to the school, the schools were warm. Yet our children had to walk between eight and ten miles per day, go to a cold school with no heat. The teachers that teach the school, they live in Charleston—fifteen or eighteen miles away—and the children have to stand outside until the teachers come. Then when the teachers come, if they didn't have any wood, they got to go out in back of the school and get wood to make up the fire. Whether it raining, whether it cold, whether it snowing, those children have to walk there, and after they got the fire started, it being so cold, I don't think they could concentrate so well. And beside that they

142
302
291

[p. 153]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 87 177 185 [661] have forty to fifty children to one teacher, and have to carry 'em from scratch to seventh grade.

So we know that was a terrible condition, and that's the condition that I want to try to eliminate. And that's my reason for not taking this bribe. I know that we wouldn't have gotten anywhere, not as long as I was willing to take bribe and go along with the white folks. I had made some enemy by not taking the bribe. I had made some of my people afraid of me because I kept on fighting for the Negroes' right. But I didn't stop.

159 494 177 [465] The white folks cut off this one big plantation that I used to haul to, as I had three buses and two trucks. Sometimes I make sixty dollars, sixty to eighty dollars a day, with three or four vehicle--twenty dollars for each one --to carry the people there. They cut that off, but I wouldn't stop. I keep on driving and keep on fighting.

809 813 813 494 Since we have gotten the high school, now we have had quite a few children graduated from the high school here on the island. Since then we have been able to get this consolidated grammar school, and we have buses.

Mr. Esau Jenkins

WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE WHEN WE GO INTO COURT

159 177 612 666 I'll tell you another way voting was able to help us. I could remember not too long ago, we didn't have a chance when we go into court. I remember a day I was riding with a man coming to Johns Island from Charleston, and a white person ran into the back of his truck. When we stop to find out what happen to the person, the law took side with the person who ran into the back of his truck, and he had to go to court.

We all thought that the judge would say, "Well, somebody ran into the back of the truck, certainly seem like that person is wrong." Unfortunately, he said that the colored man was wrong. He didn't have a chance in the court. But we decided to change that thing by getting people to see the importance of citizenship, registration and voting.

159 494 666 185 We got them to be interested in organizing what we call the Progressive Club. I emphasize the word "progressive" which mean look upward, do something better. And in this club we told them that if you're not registered

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

185
159 to start with, you're going to have to *become* a registered citizen if you join.
And we ask every individual to pay twenty-five cent per month. For what?
470 Just in case when you go into these unjust courts, your money pools and
692 somebody'll stand the bonds, or pay the fine. Now things are changed. The time would come when this same magistrate who have never listened to Negroes would need their vote.

159 One year when he ran for the third time, the white folks decided to vote
177 against him—not all the white folks, just about fifty percent of them. And
666 he was thinking about dropping out of the election. He came to me and ask, "What can you all do? I understand that the white folks is against me
664 because in the court sometime ago I was little bit lenience with Negro."
185 So I told him if he would promise that he would treat Negroes better, make them realize that they are human being when they come into the court, not charge them for everything or just assume that they are wrong, but just give them what belongs to them—if they are right, let them know they are right—I said, "We will vote for you. We got a few Negroes voting. If you got fifty percent of your people, the rest of the Negroes certainly would turn the tide."

And when that night came, he won by the many Negroes had registration certificate. That change the situation. That magistrate now, whenever our people go into the court, he is very frank and fair with us. And so for that reason, we felt like the more we could get people registered, the better it would be.

Mrs. Alice Wine

HE IS A WONDERFUL CONQUEROR

159
479 We start the Progressive Club with about two or three hundred head of people in '48 or '49. We used to meet in Moving Star Hall every third Sunday and pay twenty-five cents a head. And after we done pay out for that piece of property we got now, we stop paying monthly dues.

159 There was a schoolhouse there, but we turn 'em into a store after we
443 buy 'em. We put all our money together and open 'em up. And we call 'em
474 Progressive Club. We been growing and growing. We is still in debt, but we are going on. And Mr. Jenkins, he is so good, he is so kind, so soft-
185

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 hearted, he don't care what the people said, but he going on. He is a wonderful conqueror, I tell you that.
474
443 And John Smalls, he just stick and stand right there as a sale-man. Sell
185 in the store. He is the head of buying for the store. Bill Saunders is the Manager of the store. And I am the Treasurer. Mr. Jenkins is the President. So we stick and stand, thick and thin, right there.

159 I think this the best place on Johns Island. I say to myself, "is a Chris-
578 tian place" because the good Lord help us so far in all these years. We ain't had no bad quarrels yet. 'Cause they always divide a row. I not say no row
629 don't be there. They be there. But if they know, Esau or John, they will divide the row. They will ask them nicely to quit. Or they put them out. We never had nobody hurt one another yet.

Mr. Esau Jenkins

NOW WE CALL IT SEA ISLAND CENTER

159
443 The Progressive Club grew a little bit. We finished paying for the old
474 building. Then after we have taken out what it takes to run the store for the
185 year, each member (thirteen people) gets a dividend. The first year it was twenty-five dollars. Next year each person got thirty dollars. I felt like it was some motivation for all of them to find out that we are now getting something back.

159 And then I said to them that since this building was bought old and is
185 about to outlive its usefulness, that we need to build something that will be
345 serviceable to not only this community, but for the whole sea islands. I
341 thought that a place large enough for basketball and other games and workshops would be something that could bring in other people to give ideas what could be done for the community and other communities. I suggested to them that this ought to be done. I felt like if we got together and work heartily together, cooperatively together, that it could be done.

We have one or two person oppose my idea about a huge building like that, for fear that we wouldn't be able to pay for the thing, or that we wouldn't even be able to get it built to start with. One of the members stated that he hoped he could live long enough to see one side of the wall go up. When I was told that, I said maybe he didn't feel he have long to live. I guess he was surprised to see it go up.

159 One member couldn't believe that Negroes could get together and pool
185 their money and buy something and get along all right. It took me ten years to convince him. He told somebody that when I first started the Progressive Club he thought I was looking out for Esau Jenkins and the family. This person told me, "But I found out when you went and bought that place. The money was loaned to you, and you put all as many names as possible on

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

142
291
443

the deed, and let them run it, and just check with them once a month, so they believe you meant good for them. And now I have all the confidence in you." Evidently that's the reason why it took me ten years to make him realize we can get along together.

159
185

The whole entire group work faithfully with me now. I think we are doing very well because of the fact that we are working together. And more people are using the place now. They see the need for it.

They didn't have any place to go on this island for recreation. That's one reason we built this, and then call it "sea island" center instead of community center, because we serve James Island, Johns Island and Wadmalaw. Unless they play in somebody's yard, there's not a place where they can have a proper game on any one of these islands.

159
345

Our school doesn't have a gym, probably won't ever have one. In October of this year the basketball teachers came down to the Progressive

(526)
(873)

(TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 191)

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
HN23 Sea Islanders HN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Club and asked us to let them play basketball there. They'd been playing outside during this basketball season, and they'd been getting beat eighty-something to twenty.

Last night we had the school come in and they had a talent show, and had a record hop behind it, and I understand about two hundred head or more were there. Then we started a Boy Scout here. We are interested in getting the boys because we feel like it would be a good thing for young boys to be a better citizen. They are planning to have their programs at the Club.

Then we have a young citizenship group that we organized. It concerns itself with race relations and voter registration or everything that goes to make the human being happy. They got a volume of encyclopedia to study a variety of words that they might have a vocabulary large enough to answer questions. And they feel happy about it, because that's one of the things kept them from running up and down the street and have nothing else to do.

I stated before that we emphasize the word "progressive." If we are going to be progressive on this island, we still have a lot to do.

Mr. Esau Jenkins

THOSE TYPEWRITER CAME FALLING DOWN IN THE SCHOOL, OVERNIGHT

We need better equipment and better instruction in our schools to make our children better able to compete with other children. I felt there are so many Negroes whose children wouldn't be college material, and so many Negroes' income wouldn't allow them to send their children to college. If a child goes to school and just take up home economics and some agriculture, they wouldn't able to use it when they come out, and they be just as bad or worse off than a child who hasn't gone to high school who will go on the farm and work and never think about it.

The child who had been through high school feel bad scrubbing somebody's floor or working on the farm--much worse than the child who never had any training. So my suggestion was that the school give shorthand and typing.

I told Robert Johnson, a man who is very energetic in doing things, to go to the Haut Gap School and ask the principal if it be possible to get in some typewriters and give shorthand and typing, that our girls who would want to be secretary and can't go to college would come out and know how

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 185 813 to do something. They could take dictation and maybe could be hired in some of these lawyers' offices.

The principal told him that the boys and girls there don't have the aptitude for that kind of thing. In fact he said that on the national average the boys and girls who finish Haut Gap School are no more than about tenth grade scholars. So Mr. Johnson say, "I surprise to hear you say that, because it seem you ought to try to correct that kind of thing, if it be true."

The principal sent Mr. Johnson to the man who is the supervisor over the schools here on Johns Island. The supervisor told him that the typewriters would cost a lot of money. If he insist that his daughter or some other girls take typing and shorthand, they could go to the Negro high school on James Island. Mr. Johnson contention was that that would be too far away.

159 185 197 813 Then I found out one day that the white high school on Johns Island had typing and shorthand. A white man came to my restaurant to fix the cigarette machine and said to me, "Esau, I congratulate you for sending your children to college." He said, "I couldn't send my daughter, but she has a good job. She works for one of the lawyers downtown."

I ask him, "Where did your daughter get her training?"

He said, "St. John's High."

I said, "St. John's High doesn't teach shorthand and typing."

He said, "Oh, yes it does. That's where my daughter learned and she's making good now."

Well that burn me a little bit when he told me that, so I brought it up that Sunday in the PTA, and I talk a long time about it. I told the principal and the teachers, "This is our children being hurt. I went all out for a high school here on Johns Island--I guess a lot of people were afraid to walk with me, some of my own race--because I was fighting white folks. Yet I was fighting that our tax money would be beneficial to our children. Now we need typewriters here. If we don't get it, certainly I'll try to find anybody who I know, as many as I know, to send to St. John's High School."

Well, I know they didn't want the Negroes to come there at that time, because you know this thing hadn't gotten full under way yet about integration. But we could make some trouble.

So I was told that Monday morning somebody rush to the superintendent's office and said, "You know, Esau talk a lot down there yesterday, and that crazy Negro say he'll send somebody to St. John's High School." He say, "The best thing you better do, you better try to get them typewriters."

So those typewriter came falling down in the school, overnight just

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 185 873 177

about. I don't think they got the person to teach shorthand yet. Some of the teachers said it seemed like I was against them. I tell them, "I wasn't against any of you, but I asked you not to get in the way. You're not going to stand in the way of our children's education. You got yours."

Mr. Esau Jenkins

I AM TRYING TO GET HELP THROUGH THE WAR ON POVERTY

159 185 735 746

Because I feel there needs to be work here for our young people, and care for our children so their parents can also make a good wage, I am trying to get help through the War on Poverty.

I told the poverty committee that I am a native of Johns Island. I said that I have been working over the years trying to obliterate ignorance, to promote health, social, educational and civic welfare, and to combat juvenile delinquency and to secure a more rich and abundant life to ourselves and to our posterity. I told them that we have obligated ourselves and denied ourselves and begged and borrowed money to help build a center that our boys and girls and adults could have a place on the island where they can have games and workshops and where we have had some folk song festivals which have brought together people of both races.

Now our people are asking us to assist them in many areas in which we cannot give help unless we get some kind of grant. They are asking for day care for preschool children so that they do not have to keep older children home from school while the parents are out working. They are asking for classes which will help them to earn some kind of living here—sewing, crafts, adult remedial reading, music, some kinds of mechanical skills. They are asking for the creation of some jobs for children who have left school, and after-school jobs for school children.

These requests have come from parents who make from $600 to $2,000 a year and have from two to eight children in their homes.

If we receive the grant we have asked for, we can employ twelve or fourteen persons for the Progressive Club Sea Island Center's program—a director, assistant director, dietician, secretaries, teachers, assistants, and a janitor.

We promised the committee if they would give us this badly needed grant, which would help alleviate the cycle of poverty in this area, we are willing to do our part in seeing it become a reality.

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mr. Esau Jenkins

OUT OF EGYPT I AM GOING TO CALL MY SONS

159 185 443 474 Now if anybody is happy, it ought to be Esau Jenkins, the person who is talking here to you. Why? Twelve years and some months ago in this community, I organized a club—what we call the Progressive Club.

You folks have helped me start as a man and form a group. You are selling groceries, you are selling gasoline. Besides that, some time the early part of this month you have paid out all your debt and yet left $175 to add to your store.

159 185 When I organized this Progressive Club, I could count the number of voters on my one hand, and I don't have but five fingers.

178 In twelve years you have caused this whole island to change. Today you got school buses running by your door and picking up your children, carrying them to a high school on Johns Island. Today you can say that my children will be educated—at least get a high school education on Johns Island.

(666) Today you could say in the last election we built up our voting strength so high until the white men in Charleston have to ask us to be in the polls on Johns Island and Edisto and Wadmalaw. Negroes have helped work for the Democratic party.

Now you could not have said that twelve years ago because you didn't vote. You didn't have a school. But today you have children getting ready to compete with anybody's children, because of your cooperation.

My friends, I want you to help me that I may go on, come what may. There are any number of times that I have walked alone. There are a lot of people who are afraid, because if they be seen walking along with me, the white folks might say, "Well, he is one of these persons who are fighting me."

But share it with Esau Jenkins, and thank God that God has helped us. We made an achievement that we are not ashamed of. You don't know how much you have done, friends—how many people are talking about what you have done; how many people are reading about what you have done.

Together let us go—sisters, brothers, blacks, whites, yellows, whatnot. We are all God's people, so we got to go together. And friends, I think all over the world today, people who love freedom are saying this morning, "Out of Egypt I'm going to call my sons."

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Maggie Russell

ANYBODY WANTS TO GO BACK TO THEIR OLD HOMEPLACE

●159 You see that house through the bushes? That's Jenkins Point, where I used to live. They had houses built on the plantation for black people to live in because that was the people that worked for them. Now there are no black people living over there on Seabrook.

I married Dan Russell in 1944 and moved out to Wadmalaw. My husband was a crabber. We worked in the creek thirteen years together. I loved it.

You're not going to get onto Seabrook now. We tried to go in a boat one time and a man was standing up on the bank and shoots. He shoot up in the air. I say, "Dan, it sounds like somebody shooting." He say, "Cut the motor off." We cut the motor off and he was shooting up in the air telling us not to come over there. Then we see the sign says "no trespassing at any time." You can't even go in the little creek we used to go in to catch fish. He closed that out.

It's too bad because anybody wants to go back to their old homeplace.

142
302
301
416

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs Septima Clark

AFTER I CAME BACK FROM HIGHLANDER, I DECIDED I SHOULD GET ESAU TO GO

185
159
891
641
66
[494]

I knew Esau Jenkins when he was a boy of fourteen and came to my school to learn how to read. All his life Esau devoted himself to improving conditions on Johns Island.

Esau had a bus that he drove from Johns Island to Charleston and back, carrying tobacco workers and longshoremen to work. One morning one of the women on the bus made Esau a proposal. "I don't have much schooling, Esau," she said to him. "But I would like to be somebody. I'd like to hold up my head with other people; I'd like to be able to vote. Esau, if you'll help me a little when you have the time, I'll be glad to learn the laws and get qualified to vote. If I do, I promise you I'll register and I'll vote."

142
291
891
[p.200]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

That appealed to Esau, and he agreed to help her. He had a portion of the South Carolina laws typed up, those that pertained to registration and voting, and he passed them out to the people who rode his bus. To those who couldn't read or couldn't understand the language of the law, he patiently explained the requirements. When he was waiting for his passengers to assemble or when his bus arrived in town a few minutes early, he would discuss those laws with them.

The woman who asked Esau for help was Mrs. Alice Wine. She had a marvelous ability to memorize; she memorized the whole section of the constitution that they were studying. Soon she was ready to go and be registered.

While she was standing in line awaiting her turn, one of the women ahead of her, in reading a section of the constitution, mispronounced the word "miscegenation." Immediately Mrs. Wine pronounced it correctly. The registrar spoke out sharply, "No coaching, please!" When it came her time, Mrs. Wine "read" every word perfectly by reciting from memory. She was given her registration certificate, and she was one happy soul.

But Mrs. Wine wasn't satisfied. She really wanted to know how to read. She asked Esau if there was any kind of school where she could learn to read and write.

After I came back from going to Highlander the first time, I decided that I should get Esau to go. We went up there and found out that many people could talk to him and give him help.

Myles Horton had been into Charleston to try to get people to come up to Highlander. Now, through Esau, he had a way to reach people. One Christmas Myles went down there with his children and spent the whole Christmas season just walking around the island and talking. He stayed in Esau's house, and the people really enjoyed him. Myles had a way of speaking to people that made them become endeared to him.

Myles always told people about the injustices that were there, that they had not seen. He said, "Now, you know, any day I can go back with my own people and not have to endure these things, but you have to live with them always. I want you to see if you can get to the place where you can register and vote. You need to think about what you can do for these children that are coming along."

(113) Septima's words are from her autobiographical book *Ready from Within: Septima Clark and the Civil Rights Movement*, written with Cynthia Stokes Brown and published in 1986 by Wild Trees Press, Box 378, Navarro, Calif. 95463.

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Idell Smalls

I WANT THE YOUTH TO BE PROUD OF WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE FROM

159 I was born on Yonges Island. My mother was a farm worker, my father an oyster picker. I attended elementary and high school here on the island, but my family could not afford to send me to college. Instead I worked on the farm and restaurants to help my mother raise six children. I married and lived for a time in Washington, D.C. I returned to the island for a visit and decided it was time to move home.

159 177 In 1985 I had the opportunity to go to Nairobi, Kenya. I had an experience that is hard to put into words. Being there, I could feel, smell, and relive my childhood through tradition, dialect, customs, and being able to look at my people there in Nairobi and see my family in South Carolina in 159 186 178 their faces. On returning home I wanted to instill in the youth and adults the importance of holding onto our heritage and African customs, because not many of us will ever get to Africa to experience what I did. I wanted the youth to be proud of who we are and where we're from.

191 197 The trip helped me address some of the problems our teens were having, such as being teased about the Gullah dialect, which is a mixture of African and American speech. We began to develop a play called "In Celebration of 536 888 Us." Each teen adopted a senior at the senior center and began interviewing her about her life. The teens wrote and produced the play.

We're focusing on changing images and instilling self-respect in the young adults of the sea islands through economic and cultural survival development.

EXAMPLES OF DAILY ROUTINES OF SEA ISLANDERS

512
•159

Sister Carrie.--I can't help but turn around. Sister Carrie at 77 is up at 6:00 A.M. these days. During the school season all the children in the community stop at her gap to warm themselves by the fire and eat the pastries she prepares for them. A great grandmother, Sister Carrie has raised thirteen children. In reflecting on her fifty-one year marriage, she says "da women ta dae ain't wife lik on ma dae. Ca'n member but one dae I ain't had supper steamn hot an d table fer ma husbin." What Sister Carrie did not include was that during those years her day started at 4:30 A.M. By 5:30 A.M. breakfast had been prepared and she was on her way to the fields. She worked the field until 2:30 P.M. when she stopped and headed home to prepare the supper meal. After the evening meal and when the dishes had been cleaned Sister Carrie spent the remaining hours either sewing or shelling beans until the light disappeared. At which time, the family gathered for evening prayer as the final act of the day.

159

D ele Decon.--Decon Eugene at eighty-three years still breaks his ground with mule and plow. He begins his day at 5:30 A.M. and ends when there is just no more light to work by. The decon has raised eleven head of children, all of whom are away in New York. He and his wife live close to their land, only when tragedy becons are they away. In

159 telling why there are not more of his generation around now to keep company he says "en d last years I ca'n waak lik I en d past. Dey'll be many mo ob ma time round here da dae, butbiln d white man's bridges and railroad kill mussa us out. Wen dem come from d railroad waak dey body was dead. I tri ta tel dem ta lern to make lik waak, but dey mules n at age fifty dey was tiad ole men. Oderwize dey'll be many mo ob ma people wete me tadae."

159 461 Reverend Gripe.--The right Reverend Gripe differentiated between human and inhuman labor. Born in 1893, this man refused to work for the large white farmers. He worked and maintained his own land, but when there was an extra penny in "fightin d white man field" he refused. Once he went to lime house store (Captain Limehouse, the head of a powerful family in the area) to buy steak meat. Captain Limehouse a noted nigger whipper asked "where a nigger git steak money?" The six foot three inch two hundred plus pound Reverend Gripe replied "by not waakin ya fields," at which Limehouse laughed and dismissed the Reverend as crazy. Taking insult the Reverend jumped in his new Nash automobile and went then and thereafter to the city for his steak meat.

177 RACE RELATIONS ON THE ISLANDS

Now with bridges and interconnecting paved roadways

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

that was distinctive. He taught his wife Milly (Illustration 34A) how to make "goof bags." Apparently his magic was no more potent than Gullah Jack's when it came to protecting himself. Gullah Jack was executed in Charleston for his part in the uprising of 1822; and when Jim Polecat was old, decrepit, and a nuisance, his own children pushed him into the fireplace, and burned him to ashes. Milly must have been a peculiar character. She would turn her back on you when she had anything to say. When her cabin was built she insisted on having no windows—a good African mode of construction. She said: "Door's enough to watch." When urged to have them for ventilation, she insisted that "Chimney gives enough air." There were no windows put in. The walls of her cabin were lined with boxes and trunks that had belonged to her children, all of whom were dead or in the penitentiary. It is no wonder she was moody, and that the other Negroes were afraid of her. They might well be, for—in addition to being looked upon as a witch—she was the mother of seven murderers.

In every Negro settlement there are usually frizzled chickens.[31] These curious-looking birds are supposed to be on the watch for goof bags or any "sleight-o'-hand" buried under doorsteps. Josephine tells me that she always keeps one around for such a purpose. If the chicken "come clean" (loses its feathers), it is a sure proof that it has scratched up something intended for its owner's bad luck. So much for black magic. You hear little about it, but the belief in its efficacy turns up every now and then when least expected.

At the risk of being tiresome, it may be well to call attention to various obscure customs among the Negroes that could easily be passed over as idiosyncrasies. From the pulpit of the Jewtown African Baptist Church I heard Parson Joe Lowman say with a weak voice that he was feelin' very po'ly and in no condition to preach a Christmas sermon, but by the grace of God he would do his best. I was astonished to find, as he warmed to his subject, "The Christ Child and the Three Wise Men," that his voice grew stronger and stronger. When his sermon was finished, I realized that I would never hear a better one, and that he had either received supernatural aid or was a consummate artist—perhaps both. Later, I read an article by Morton C. Kahn, on "Adventures in Medical Research among Two Strange Tribes of Dutch Guiana,"[32] in which the author described the greeting employed by the Bush Negroes, the translation of which runs somewhat as follows: "Howdy, white man.

[31] Captain R. S. Rattray tells us such freakish birds are called asense chickens in Ashanti.
[32] "Where Black Man Meets Red." Natural History, May, 1936.

A. [For Illustration 34, see Category 754, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

gun. Mrs. Arnold, who was the daughter of Captain Stevens, of Frederica, told me how her father's slave, Old Grace, had been captured in a "goober patch" in Africa. Old Grace and some members of her tribe had made a stealthy night raid on the stockaded garden of a neighboring village. Although Mrs. Arnold told me the story over twenty-five years ago, I can still see Old Grace trying to climb the fence when she and her companions were discovered.

We are supposed to dig our graves with our teeth, and inferentially Grace's appetite for peanuts was her undoing, but no grave was dug for her, if the story of her end is true. Mrs. Stevens always cautioned her children to keep away from Old Grace's cabin, for she boasted that she had eaten pickaninnies in her native land, and "the meat was sweet." She was also reputed to be a hag and many a "marsh tacky"—found in the morning with a matted, tangled mane—was she supposed to have ridden. When the Federal forces—followed by an iniquitous carpet-bagger [49]—took over St. Simon's, Captain Stevens, although a Dane and a non-combatant, was sent to Fort Delaware, where he died. His widow and children were sent to Savannah. After the war was over, they returned to Frederica and found that Old Grace had disappeared. No one would talk about her, but the story got around that her own people had grown tired of her wicked ways, and had staked her out at low tide in one of the salt-water creeks. If the water rose above her head, that was an act of God, and was no concern of those who did the deed. In Miss Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa*, I have lately found that this mode of drowning was one of the popular methods of disposing of African witches.[50]

Besides survivals of language, customs, and beliefs, we have survivals of particular skills. Such useful ones as carrying unwieldy bundles on the head, making canoes and mortars by hollowing out logs, weaving baskets—particularly the flat type used for fanning rice—are a commonplace in the South, and may not on this account

[49] *His name was Eaton, and he is said to have come from Maine. He purported to be a minister and insisted on remarrying the Negroes at twenty dollars a pair. Although the price was high, they were enabled, through his assistance, to occupy the homes of the refugee planters. Before Mrs. Stevens was out of her house the Negroes came in and made their choice of rooms—generally a family to a room. When the Postells returned to Kelvin Grove Plantation after the war there were ten Negro families in their house. Not a shutter was on it. Every one had been taken down to make corn bins in the basement, and every pane of glass had been shattered by the gun-boats. Can we wonder that the Southerners called us "Damyankees"?*

[50] *Miss Kingsley believed that the black man recognized "in a dull sort of way" that witchcraft meant the same thing as poison. She tells that he very generally regarded "the best remedy for witching as being a brisk purgative and emetic."*

·9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

14. BLOW GABRIEL

533

533 Undoubtedly the greater part of these songs originated under the stress of re-
786 ligious emotion, such as Laura showed when she strode to the middle of my yard
152 and, with a commanding arm lifted high, intoned musically, "Blow, Gabriel!" as
159 though sure of a response. Then she called again—louder this time—"Blow, Gabriel!"
and still no answer. She waited a moment before calling at the top of her lungs, "Blow, Gabriel!"—and when nothing happened, she turned, complaining bitterly, gathered up the bunch of white oleanders she had laid beside me, and left as suddenly as she had come. Half chanting to Gabriel, she improvised as she went swiftly down the road, waving the flowers she had probably intended for the grave of her son, who lies in the old slave burying ground at Kelvin Grove.

786 It seems that earlier in the day she had shrieked and chanted, as is common
159 with those who get this type of religious hysteria. In the old days such excitement was a more usual and respected occurrence than now. The reference in old spirituals to "My head got wet wid de midnight dew" meant that under religious exaltation the individual wandered at night through wood and swamp, as Laura had for several days and nights before I saw her at the locked gate which barred her way to the plantation graveyard.

123 I called, "Where are you going?" She seemed to waken out of a dream and said,
786 "I forgot." Then she came closer, and impressively declaimed, "Miz' Parris'—I bin
787 sent by God to you. They say I'm crazy, an' they put me in jail nine days—but I'se
159 seen God!" After a long harangue delivered in an impassioned but disconnected way, she told me she had spent Tuesday night in Hell, that she'd been crucified. The blood had trickled down her back, the thorns had pierced her arms. She threw her arms out wide as though to show me. When she noticed they weren't clean, in an abashed aside she apologetically said, "I ain't wash 'em this mornin'." Then she went on, "You needn' tell me that God meant white folks an' colored people to sit down together."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

123 I assured her, when she paused for breath, that I realized the truth of what she
784 said. She told me how she had been out picking berries that morning, and a rattlesnake
825 had charmed her little boy. "I call' to him an' he couldn' move—he jus' look at the
159 snake like this." (She stooped down and stared fixedly ahead of her.) "When I pull'
him away, the snake went shzzzz! and the poison went into me." Then it was that
she strode into the middle of the yard and called upon Gabriel.

159 The next morning I was distressed to find that Laura had been taken to jail
123 again. My cook, Julia, and I talked the situation over and decided we would be easier in our minds if we knew she ought to be there. Though noisy the day before, she appeared to be harmless. Dr. Cate, the county physician, kindly took us to the jail at noon, as he also wished to see her. When we reached her cell, he asked, "Well, Laura, what are you here for?" Her reply impressed me very much. "It's not for drinkin' or fightin'—it's a religious affair." But when she went on to say, "I'm havin' a religious war, and I'm puttin' up a dam' good fight," I realized she had better stay
(589) where she was until her ardor cooled:

Blow Gabriel
At the Judgment
Blow Gabriel
At the Judgment Barl
Blow 'um easy
At the Judgment
Blow 'um easy
At the Judgment Barl
My Lord call you
At the Judgment
My Lord call you
At the Judgment Barl
Why don't you answer
At the Judgment
Why don't you answer
At the Judgment Barl
Ha-Ha angel
At the Judgment
Ha-Ha angel
At the Judgment Barl

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

794
796

"Covenant meetin'," now called "Pure Mind Meetin'," was formerly held at the last prayer meeting before Communion Sunday, and was of service in keeping track of the members and making sure, from their own words, that they were "livin' in union." No more meetings of this character have been held at the "South End" of St. Simon's since Betty Brown paid the penalty of false testimony. She got up and told the members: "I'm at peace with everybody." Then, as she was leaving the church, she said: "I'm goin' home t' put Josie [her crippled grandson] out the house." She walked to the step, fell, and never reached home alive.

BELIEVER I KNOW

175
•159
[533]
[291]
[829]

This song, sung on Sapelo by Katie Brown, while sitting under her tall magnolia tree, reflects the peace of her surroundings. Although she was born about 1850, her voice is remarkably true and sweet. She tells me that the record book of the Spalding Plantation has her age as ten years when the War Between the States began, but she believes she was two years older, for she wore a shift[4] at the time her family left Sapelo and "went to the Main" for refuge on the Stephens Plantation in Bryan County. In December, after the "Big War" was over, they walked to Savannah. There Katie's mother, Cotty Grovenor, petitioned the Freedman's Bureau to let her return to Sapelo. "March was comin' and time to plant." She remembers distinctly how sore and swollen her feet were from walking. Cotty had to soak them in warm water each night.

533
539

I know, I know Lord
Believer I know
I know, I know Lord
Believer I know
I know the road so thorny
Believer I know
I know the road is thorny
Believer I know

[4] *The slaves count their age by some such event. Katie seemed to be proud of the fact she was old enough to wear a shift. Shad Hall must be younger, for he still wore a "binyan" (apparently an African word), which was the kind of shirt worn by young boys before they wore pants. With a grin, he told me their first pants had no pockets so that it would be less easy for them to steal eggs.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

JOHN, JOHN

159 The temptation is strong to tell the clever sayings of Quarterman, but the songs he sang, and not what he said, must take precedence. However, one incident which has a bearing on history must be mentioned. Quarterman's mother was a Butler slave, like Liverpool, but before Quarterman was born she was taken by Roswell King in exchange for services as manager of the Butler estate, and placed on his Liberty County plantation.

The last time that Liverpool and Quarterman were together at my Corner for a "sing," Liverpool made use of the opportunity to deliver his customary eulogy of Pierce Butler and his family. I saw that Quarterman was uneasy and fidgety. The minute that Liverpool showed signs of stopping, Quarterman was on his feet and told the audience what a superior "Maussa" he had had. Shades of Fanny Kemble and all departed abolitionists! The irony of the situation is apparent to those who have read what Fanny Kemble said in her *Journal* about Quarterman's master, "Mr. K." I saw the meeting of "Mr. K.'s" two grandchildren, Miss Julia King and her brother Audley, with Quarterman, and the delight of all three was extremely significant. We read a good deal these days about the way the Negroes "hate" the white people. But let me say that such was not the universal rule in the old days under the patriarchal form of society.[7] The type of education given today, instead of closing the breach between the races, appears to be widening it. I have found only one ex-slave who shows bitterness, and that is toward a distracted mistress who, during war-time, exacted two tasks when one had been the usual requirement.

Quarterman sang many pretty hymns, but in the next breath he sang slave songs that came "out of Maffew. You fine 'em right dere." When I tried to explain that the words did not make the tune, he was puzzled. According to him all you had to do was to go to the Bible and there was your song. There is more to the idea than appears on the surface. You heard a verse read and at once its rhythm fitted something that was sung in Africa. Perhaps this is why the Negroes call the old songs "familiar tunes."

[7] *It is evident from the story of "The Old-Time Negro," by Thomas Nelson Page, that "the relation which once existed all over the South between the old-time Southerner and the old-time darkey . . . still exists where the latter survives."*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

WHEN MY LORD CALLS ME I MUST GO

159 567 The last time Lady Butler saw Liverpool she told him that he must be here when next she came to America. His reply was: "When my Lord calls me I must go." On one of her yearly visits to Darien, she gave him a rose to wear in his buttonhole, and called him "the last flower of the Butler flock." When she saw him again, she found that the rose had miraculously become a perennial from the five and ten cent store. To the paper rose he attached the tribute she had paid him!

Liverpool was loyalty itself to the family of his master, and the same can be said of Dan Wing, who went to England with his mistress, Frances Butler Leigh,[8] when she married the Dean of Hereford Cathedral. Dan and Liverpool, both mentioned in Mrs. Leigh's *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation* (1866–1876), were keenly interested in what she had said about them. When I asked Liverpool about his display of insubordination, of which she tells, he said—with a chuckle—that his head had been cut by Mr. N., the overseer, because of "back-talk." However, Mrs. Leigh apparently pardoned his outbreak, for he proudly showed me the photograph of herself which she had given him.

567 152 No one, least of all the descendants of the slave-owners, could wish for a return of the institution, but a system that could produce such fine characters as the Caters' Dembo, the Kings' Neptun', his son Clarence,[9] the Butlers' Dan and Liverpool, and "Miss Sis" Clifton's Mary Covington—born soon after freedom—and many other Negroes I could name, must have had its redeeming features. I know it will be said the system had little to do with their development, that it was the individual. Maybe so, but after reading everything I can find concerning our ante-bellum Negroes I wonder why there are not more who are outstanding characters today. Per-

[8] The daughter of Fanny Kemble and the mother of Alice, who became Lady Butler.

[9] Clarence's death, a couple of years ago, was a great loss to our community. He was a good man and an excellent singer.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

FOR I AIN' GOIN' T' DIE NO MO'

583 764 (574) The rhythm and tune of this "settin'-up" song suggest an old English ballad. As can be seen, there is nothing religious about the ironic observation in the first two lines. Julia, who taught me the song, laughingly said: "It's true all right. Mighty few visit the sick, but hundreds go to the wake and the buryin'."

(539)

When I'm on my sick bed—nobody visit me
But now I'm goin' to the graveyard—everybody follow me.
My sister won't y'u low my pillow
Low—low—O-h low
My sister won't y'u low my pillow
Low—for I ain' goin' t' die no mo'.
Somebody goin' to low my pillow
Low—low—O-h low
Somebody goin' to low my pillow
Low—for I ain' goin' t' die no mo'.

● 159 567 Janey Jackson, (Illustration 33)[A] one of the most picturesque characters of Brunswick, sang an additional verse of the same song. Janey was born on St. Simon's, in "Nigger House Field" at Kelvin Grove, in 1826. At the age of twelve she was sold by the Caters, with her parents,[21] two sisters and a brother, to Mr. Henry duBignon, of Jekyl Island. She told me her family came over to St. Simon's frequently to see friends and relatives, as it was only a short row at low tide before the channel was deepened. Janey described the Caters' Old Dembo, Neptun' Small, father of Clarence and Cornelia, and Adam Proctor, father of Julia and Willis. No doubt it was on St. Simon's that she learned this verse:

(533) (539)

When I bin in de worl' bin a sin—nobody had nothin' to say
But now I come into de House of God—everybody got somethin' to say.
Carry me an' bring me—in dat returnal day
Carry me an' bring me—in dat returnal day.

Under the influence of the duBignons, from whom she also learned to speak French, Janey became a Catholic; and when she went to live in Brunswick, she

[21] Janey's father, Jack, was an African prince, but her mother was "country born" (born in America).

A. [For Illustration 33, see Category 142, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

always attended early mass. She never married; her sweetheart, Ishmael, belonged to another family, and his owners, thinking he would not be worth much to them in the field if his wife were on another plantation, encouraged a match with one of their own slaves.

To the end of her life, she smoked a pipe, and cooked her food in a black pot over a fire in the yard exactly as she had done in her youth. She must have been very strong, as she rowed a boat, did her half-acre of cotton, and, in her own words, "never knew what it was to be tired." She was a hundred and nine years old when she died in 1936, and evidently came of an exceptionally long-lived family, for her father was a centenarian, her sister lived to be a hundred and eight, and a cousin, also born in 1826, outlived her. Janey was straight and healthy to the last, and the sphinx-like, unwrinkled face in her coffin was like a piece of smooth black ebony. I had not realized in life how handsome she was or how Egyptian were her features. The inexpressible dignity of that dark mask so impressed me that I went back three times to make sure I would not forget it.

"BURYIN'"

Old residents of St. Simon's tell me that before the days of automobiles, when even horses [22] and wagons were luxuries, a Negro "buryin'" was an impressive affair. The mourners sang as they walked from the church, where the service was held, to the graveyard a mile away. The singers could be heard the minute they left the church, for at that time "they opened their mouths. They weren't like the young people today—too proud to sing." [23]

The home-made coffin, lined with "paper cambric" and covered with black calico or darkened with lampblack, was placed in the "rough box" and carried on a one-horse wagon. Only the preacher rode with the driver. The men walked single file on one side of the road and the women on the other.

When the minister could not come to the island for the church service, it was not held until his next visit—possibly in three weeks, sometimes in three months. In the days when "Reverend" Andrew Neal officiated, if he was urgently needed to

[22] After the War Between the States only a vicious stallion, belonging to the Coupers, was left on St. Simon's. It was necessary to hobble him before he could be used. There were plenty of ponies, called "tackies," living on the salt marshes; but Joe tells me they were wild, like deer, and it never paid to buy one.

[23] It was said of Adam and Neptun' Small and MacWilliams that they could be heard a mile —than which, according to slave standards, there was no higher praise.